

STEVEN R. HURST

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Republicans and Democrats in Congress appear to have found a compromise way out of a deeply partisan standoff that threatened millions of Americans with a big New Year's tax increase, the unemployed with loss of government benefits and the whole federal government with a shutdown. The logjam appeared to have broken on Thursday, one day before the government would have been forced to close its doors because of a lack of money, the result of a tangled dispute over taxes and spending. The issues have become a kind of holy grail among politicians facing elections in less than 11 months.

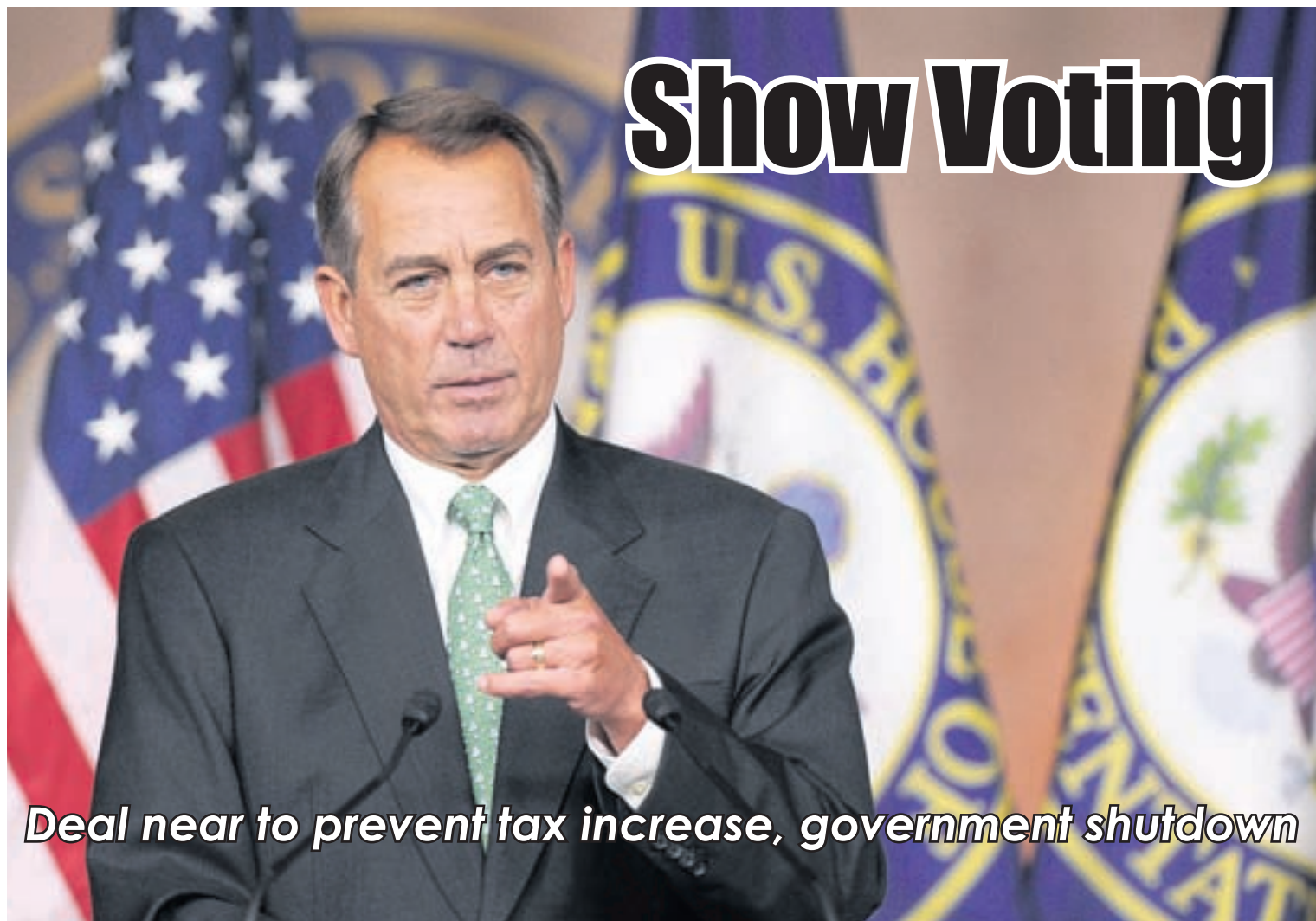
At issue are the extension of a reduced tax Americans automatically pay into the Social Security pension plan, extended federal government payments to the unemployed and funding to keep the government working.

President Barack Obama and the Democrats had wanted to pay for the extended Social Security tax break, a reduction in the so-called payroll tax, by imposing a 1.9 percent surtax on incomes of the richest Americans, those taking home more than \$1 million a year. They apparently have dropped that demand and will find the money to finance continued cuts through higher fees charged by the mixed public-private organization that guarantees home mortgages.

Congressional Republicans had steadfastly refused to accept any increase on taxes, a bedrock issue for the party.

A new poll shows Americans hold members of Congress from both parties in record low regard, but see Republicans as more to blame for the legislature's poor record of lawmaking this year.

Continued on next Page



## Show Voting

*Deal near to prevent tax increase, government shutdown*

House Speaker John Boehner of Ohio gestuers during a news conference on Capitol Hill in Washington, Thursday, Dec. 15, 2011. Republicans and Democrats in Congress appear to have found a compromise way out of a deeply partisan standoff that threatened millions of Americans with a big New Year's tax increase, the unemployed with loss of government benefits and the whole federal government with a shutdown.

(AP Photo/Susan Walsh)

By MARGERY A. BECK

**OMAHA, Neb. (AP)** — The young father stood in line at the Kmart layaway counter, wearing dirty clothes and worn-out boots. With him were three small children. He asked to pay something on his bill because he knew he wouldn't be able to afford it all before Christmas. Then a mysterious woman stepped up to the counter. "She told him, 'No, I'm paying for it,'" recalled Edna Deppe, assistant manager at the store in Indianapolis. "He just stood there and looked at her and then looked at me and asked if it was a joke. I told him it wasn't, and that she was going to pay for him. And he just busted out in tears." At Kmart stores across the country, Santa seems to be getting some help: Anonymous donors are paying

## Secret Santas



At Kmart stores across the country, Santa seems to be getting some help: Anonymous donors are paying off strangers' layaway accounts, buying the Christmas gifts other families couldn't afford, especially toys and children's clothes set aside by impoverished parents.

off strangers' layaway accounts, buying the Christmas gifts other families couldn't afford, especially

toys and children's clothes set aside by impoverished parents. Before she left the store

Tuesday evening, the Indianapolis woman in her mid-40s had paid the layaway orders for as many as 50 people. On the way out, she handed out \$50 bills and paid for two carts of toys for a woman in line at the cash register.

"She was doing it in the memory of her husband who had just died, and she said she wasn't going to be able to spend it and wanted to make people happy with it," Deppe said. The woman did not identify herself and only asked people to "remember Ben," an apparent reference to her husband.

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# Deal near to prevent tax increase, government shutdown

Continued from front

That combined with a new Associated Press-GfK poll that shows Americans broadly in favor of an extension of the Social Security tax cut and a lengthened period of unemployment compensation payments may have helped engender the new mood for compromise.

A poll released Thursday by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press found public discontent with Congress at record levels, with two-thirds of those surveyed saying current members of Congress should be voted out of office next year. By a margin of nearly two-to-one (40 percent to 23 percent), more of those questioned by Pew blamed Republican leaders than Democratic leaders for Congress' "do-nothing" record.

The new AP-GfK poll found that most Americans, six in 10, want Congress to approve an extension of



**House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi of Calif. gestures during a news conference on Capitol Hill in Washington, Thursday, Dec. 15, 2011. Republicans and Democrats in Congress appear to have found a compromise way out of a deeply partisan standoff that threatened millions of Americans with a big New Year's tax increase, the unemployed with loss of government benefits and the whole federal government with a shutdown.**

(AP Photo/Susan Walsh)

the payroll tax reduction. What's more, the dragged-out debate over the extension is just one of many issues that have kept voters

furious with their leaders all year. Sixty percent said they are angry about the political situation.

With that as a background,

congressional leaders began speaking about compromise.

"We can extend payroll tax relief for American workers

and create new jobs and keep the government running and, frankly, we can do it in a bipartisan way," Rep. John Boehner, Republican speaker of the House of Representatives, told reporters in a turnabout from weeks of partisan sniping from both sides.

"No more show votes," Boehner said after praising earlier remarks by Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, a Democrat, who said that lingering disagreements on a mammoth spending bill could be resolved easily: "It's just time to legislate."

Reid opened the Senate's morning session by saying he and the chamber's top Republican had held talks to resolve remaining disputes. With lawmakers itching to return home before the holidays, Reid said he and the leader of the Senate's Republican minority, Sen. Mitch McConnell, hope they can reach a deal "that would get us out of here in a reasonable time, in the next few days." □





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# U.S. finds bias against Latinos by Arizona sheriff

MARC LACEY

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**PHOENIX** – In a harshly worded critique of the country's best-known sheriff, the Justice Department accused Joe Arpaio of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office of engaging in "unconstitutional policing" by unfairly targeting Latinos for detentions and arrests and retaliating against those who complain.

After an investigation that lasted more than three years, the civil rights division of the Justice Department said in a 22-page report that the sheriff's office has "a pervasive culture of discriminatory bias against Latinos" that "reaches the highest levels of the agency." The department interfered with the inquiry, the government said, prompting a lawsuit that eventually led Arpaio and his deputies to cooperate.

"We have peeled the onion to its core," said Thomas E. Perez, the assistant attorney general for civil rights, noting during a conference call with reporters Thursday morning that more than 400 inmates, deputies and others were

interviewed as part of the review, including Arpaio and his command staff. Perez said the inquiry, which also included jail visits and reviews of thousands of pages of internal documents, raised the question of whether Latinos were receiving "second-class policing services" in Maricopa County.

The report stems from a civil inquiry and Perez said he hoped Arpaio would cooperate with the federal government in turning the department around. Should he refuse, a lawsuit will be filed and his department could lose millions of dollars in federal funding, Perez said.

A separate federal grand jury investigation of Arpaio's office is continuing, focusing on accusations of abuse of power by the department's public corruption squad.

Arpaio was singled out for criticism in the report, which faulted him as distributing racially charged letters he had received and helping to nurture the department's "culture of bias."

Asked at a news conference about Arpaio's role



Thomas Perez, the Justice Department's assistant attorney general for civil rights, at a news conference in Phoenix, on Dec. 15, 2011. An investigation by the division that lasted more than three years singled out Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio as helping to nurture the department's "culture of bias" by unfairly targeting Latinos for detentions and arrests.

(Joshua Lott/The New York Times)

in the department's problems, Perez said: "We have to do cultural change and culture change starts with people at the top." Perez made a point of reaching out to Arpaio's underlings. "These findings are not meant to impugn your character," he said to the department's deputies. Arpaio, 79, who calls himself "America's toughest sheriff," did not immediately respond to the charges but he has brushed off similar accusations in the past. Long a lightning rod for controversy, Arpaio looms large over Arizona and beyond. □

## Anonymous donors pay off Kmart layaway accounts

Continued from front

Deppe, who said she's worked in retail for 40 years, had never seen anything like it.

"It was like an angel fell out of the sky and appeared in our store," she said.

Most of the donors have done their giving secretly. Dona Bremser, an Omaha nurse, was at work when a Kmart employee called to tell her that someone had paid off the \$70 balance of her layaway account, which held nearly \$200 in toys for her 4-year-old son.

"I was speechless," Bremser said. "It made me believe in Christmas again."

Dozens of other customers have received similar calls in Nebraska, Michigan, Iowa, Indiana and Montana.

The benefactors generally ask to help families who are squirreling away items for young children. They often pay a portion of the balance, usually all but a few dollars or cents so the layaway order stays in the store's system.

The phenomenon seems to have begun in Michigan before spreading, Kmart executives said.

"It is honestly being driven by people wanting to do a good deed at this time of the year," said Salima Yala, Kmart's division vice president for layaway.

The good Samaritans seem to be visiting mainly Kmart stores, though a Wal-Mart spokesman said a few of his stores in Joplin, Mo., and Chicago have also seen some layaway accounts paid off. □

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# White House stands by Medal of Honor award

The Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — President Barack Obama is standing by his award of the Medal of Honor, the highest combat decoration for a U.S. soldier, to a Marine in the Afghanistan war. A published report charges exaggerations and untruths in the official account of his bravery. Obama presented the award to Marine Sgt. Dakota Meyer on Sept. 15, calling him the “best of a generation” that joined the military after the attacks on the United States on Sept. 11, 2001. He described the day in 2009 when Meyer braved enemy fire in eastern Afghanistan to save U.S. and Afghan comrades. McClatchy Newspapers said its review of documents turned up numerous assertions that are “untrue, unsubstantiated or exaggerated.”

Press Secretary Jay Carney said Thursday the award was based on sworn testimony, reviewed by the Marine Corps, and Obama “remains very proud” of Meyer and his “remarkable



President Barack Obama awards the Medal of Honor to former Marine Corps Cpl. Dakota Meyer, 23, from Greensburg, Ky., during a ceremony in the East Room of the White House in Washington. Meyer is suing defense contractor BAE Systems OASYS Inc., claiming that a manager at the company ridiculed his Medal of Honor, called him mentally unstable and suggested he had a drinking problem, thereby costing him a job. (AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais, File)

acts of bravery.”

The Marine Corps also said it stands by the process that determined Meyer deserved the medal.

“The rigorous award inves-

tigation process focuses on source information from direct eyewitnesses and other contemporaneously or near-contemporaneously recorded information,” said the statement from Marine headquarters at the Pentagon.

The Marines acknowledged that the process was not flawless.

“Because of the nature of the events supporting awards for valor, it is normal for minor discrepancies to appear when reviewing the source information and collecting eyewitness statements,” it said.

The Marines also acknowledged that the public narrative of Meyer’s actions on the battlefield, as

it appeared on the Marine Corps website, was his “personal account” of what happened. “We supported this communication method in large part because of Sgt. Meyer’s personal desire to not retell with each interview, and thereby relive, what he calls the ‘worst day of his life.’” □

Experts:

## Corzine avoided missteps in his testimony



Former MF Global Holdings Ltd. Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Jon Corzine, left, and MF Global Holdings Ltd. President and COO Bradley Abelow, testify on Capitol Hill in Washington, Thursday, Dec. 15, 2011, before the House Financial Services Committee.

(AP Photo/Susan Walsh)

**DANIEL WAGNER  
MARCY GORDON  
AP Business Writers  
WASHINGTON (AP)** —

Jon Corzine’s three days of testimony on MF Global’s collapse offered little to satisfy lawmakers or clients who lost millions when the securities firm failed. Yet legal experts say Corzine helped himself by choosing words with care and articulating an explanation that’s hard to disprove.

Corzine, a Democratic former senator and governor of New Jersey, told three congressional panels that he never intended to “misuse” client money or order anyone else to do so. He said no reasonable person who worked with him could have concluded otherwise. He also rebuffed an assertion that he knew about

customer money that might have been transferred to a European affiliate just before MF Global collapsed. It could be hard to build a persuasive case that he did know, experts say.

“It’s remarkable how he really has narrowly walked that line — to be able to communicate effectively while preserving his defenses,” said Jacob Frenkel, a former enforcement attorney with the Securities and Exchange Commission, one of the regulators investigating MF Global. “He could have hurt himself by testifying. That has not happened.”

About \$1.2 billion was found to be missing from client accounts when MF Global failed on Oct. 31, becoming the eighth-largest bankruptcy in U.S. his-

tory. Much of the missing money belonged to farmers, ranchers and other business owners who used MF Global to reduce their risks from the fluctuating prices of commodities such as corn and wheat.

Brokers such as MF Global generally are required to keep customer money in separate accounts to protect it in case the company fails. MF Global apparently failed to do so. Congress, regulators and criminal investigators are looking into the case.

Those investigations, still in their early stages, will likely yield clearer answers about how client money came to be misused. For now, it remains a mystery.

“I think it was unrealistic for Congress to expect substantive answers to these questions, because no one is that naive,” Frenkel said. “That’s why these investigations are ongoing — to figure out what happened to the money and who is responsible.”

Some of the lawmakers who questioned Corzine appeared to agree.

“If you did anything wrong, the criminal investigators will find that; I won’t,” said Massachusetts Rep. Michael Capuano, the top Democrat on the panel Corzine faced Thursday.

Corzine was careful to testify that he never “intended” for client money to be misused. That’s because intent is a key requirement of criminal prosecution, Frenkel said. □



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# FBI contacted phone monitoring firm about software

RICHARD LARDNER

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — A senior executive at a technology company that makes monitoring software that was secretly installed on 141 million cellphones said Thursday that the FBI approached the company about using its technology but was rebuffed. The disclosure came one day after FBI Director Robert Mueller assured Congress that agents "neither sought nor obtained any information" from the company, Carrier IQ. The company's statement probably will inflame suspicion about the monitoring tool and its usefulness to the U.S. government. Andrew Coward, vice president of marketing for Carrier IQ of Mountain View, California, told The Associated Press that the FBI is the only law enforcement agency that has contacted the company. Coward would not say when, why or how often the FBI had reached out to Carrier IQ, but he said the company is not working with the bureau. "There is



**FBI Director Robert Mueller testifies on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday, Dec. 14, 2011, before the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on FBI oversight. A senior executive at a technology company that makes monitoring software that was secretly installed on 141 million cellphones said Thursday that the FBI approached the company about using its technology but was rebuffed.**

(AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

no relationship between us and the FBI," Coward said. During an oversight hearing Wednesday, Mueller told the Senate Judiciary Committee that the FBI "neither sought nor obtained any information from Carrier IQ in any one of our investigations." Mueller was responding to a question by Democratic Sen. Al Franken, chairman of the

committee's privacy and technology panel, who has said collecting personal information from people's cellphones could violate federal law.

FBI spokesman Michael Kortan said in an emailed statement that the bureau's technical staff "communicates routinely with many technology companies, including Car-

rier IQ, relative to new and emerging technologies and capabilities."

The company's technology is designed as a diagnostic tool that gives mobile telephone companies the ability to gather and analyze information that helps them improve the performance of devices that operate on their networks, Carrier IQ said. The software typically is in-

stalled by the phone company or the manufacturer of the handset.

Most cellphone users were unaware the company or its software existed until last month when a security researcher, Trevor Eckhart, posted online a video he made showing how keystrokes and messages from his smartphone were logged by the Carrier IQ software. □

## Prosecutors:

# Stanford competent to stand trial

JUAN A. LOZANO

Associated Press

**HOUSTON (AP)** — Jailed Texas financier R. Allen Stanford is now competent to be tried next month on charges he bilked investors out of \$7 billion in a massive Ponzi scheme, federal prosecutors said Thursday. The prosecutors' assertion comes ahead of a mental competency hearing on Tuesday, which will be used by a federal judge to determine if Stanford's Jan. 23 trial will go forward. Stanford's attorneys say his

addiction to an anti-anxiety drug, as well as a brain injury he suffered in a jail fight, left him unable to think clearly or help in his own defense. He was declared incompetent to stand trial earlier this year. The financier spent about eight months this year being treated in a North Carolina federal prison hospital for the drug addiction he developed while jailed in Houston. "Based on its extensive analysis, (the prison hospital) concluded that Stanford 'does not suffer from a mental illness

which would interfere with his ability to understand the nature and consequences of the proceedings against him or to assist properly in his defense,'" prosecutors wrote in court documents filed Thursday. In his own court filing, Ali Fazel, one of Stanford's attorneys, said the brain injury the financier suffered in a September 2009 jail fight as well as the various medications he was given while jailed in Houston "exacerbated the accused's medical condition." □

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# Staff and benefits changes push nurses toward strikes

NINA BERNSTEIN

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**NEW YORK** – The specter of nursing strikes is looming on both coasts, as newly empowered nurses' unions confront hospitals pressed to cut costs amid changes in health care financing. In New York, more than 6,000 registered nurses are poised to walk out of three of the city's most prestigious hospitals before the year's end, mainly over changes to their health benefits and what they say are strains in staffing. The hospitals – Mount Sinai, Montefiore Medical Center and St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center – already are contracting for strike replacements at more than double normal wages.

In California, where 23,000 nurses represented by the California Nurses Association staged a one-day strike in September over similar issues, a new 24-hour walkout is set for Dec. 22 at eight hospitals in the San Francisco Bay area and one in Long Beach. Poten-



The specter of nursing strikes is looming on both coasts, as newly empowered nurses' unions confront hospitals pressed to cut costs amid changes in health care financing.

tial strikes in New Jersey and Minnesota are being advertised on the website of HealthSource Global Staffing, one of the largest strike replacement agencies, which promises "cool locations and hot paychecks" for nurses willing to fill in during a walkout.

In New York, the union, the New York State Nurses' Association, has not yet given the hospitals a 10-day strike warning, which the law requires, and last-minute settlements are still possible. But their battle with the hospitals reflects common themes across the country. The nurses, who voted overwhelmingly to authorize a strike, say they are being treated with disrespect by a corporate hospital cul-

ture that demands sacrifices from patients and those who provide their care, but pays executives millions of dollars.

Management officials defend executive pay as the price of competition for top leadership, and accuse the nurses of refusing what many other American workers have accepted: paying a share of their health insurance premiums, along with higher co-payments, deductibles and prescription costs.

Though finances differ, all hospitals face cuts in Medicaid and Medicare and uncertainty over budgets under new payment models. Among other changes are new measures on the quality of care: Hospitals will lose money if too many patients are re-admitted within 30 days, or if there are low scores on patient satisfaction surveys – two areas in which nurses play a crucial role.

For patients, the stakes are high, according to a recent study of 50 nurses' strikes in New York state between 1984 and 2004. The study, for the National Bureau of Economic Research, found that patient mortality was 19.4 percent higher during a strike, or that there was about one extra death for every 280 patients admitted, regardless of whether hospitals hired replacements or tried to manage with a small staff.

The study resonated at a Sutter Health hospital in Oakland, Calif., where the death in September of Judith Ming, 66, a cancer patient, was blamed on a medical error by one of 500 temporary nurses hired to replace those locked out for several days after their 24-hour strike. □

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# Elevator pins woman between floors, killing her

**CARA BUCKLEY  
ANDY NEWMAN**  
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Reporting was contributed by Al Baker, Stuart Elliott, Meredith Hoffman, Ray Rivera and Tim Stelloh.

NEW YORK — Suzanne Hart, a 41-year-old executive at one of Manhattan's most prominent advertising firms, was stepping into the elevator of an 85-year-old Midtown office building around 10 a.m. Wednesday, just as she had every workday for the past four years, while fellow workers streamed into the mosaic-tiled lobby. Then, in an inexplicable instant, after Hart placed one foot inside, the elevator suddenly lurched up, its door still open, according to the Fire Department. It dragged her until she was pinned, partly outside the cab, between the first and second floors, the police said. Two passengers already in the elevator car could only watch in horror, and would remain trapped in the elevator for an hour before rescuers could free them. Hart was declared dead at the scene, but her body was not removed until nearly 7 p.m. There are about 60,000 elevators in New York City, which were involved in 53 accidents last year. But just three of them were fatal, making the mechanics and the violence of Hart's death all the more unusual.

The specter of something

as mundane as an elevator ride turning deadly haunted the building, at 285 Madison Ave., and its stricken workers for the rest of the day. The building was evacuated and employees were told to work from home on Thursday. Friends and family of Hart reeled in shock, struggling to come to terms with the loss of a woman they uniformly described as generous, driven and warm.

Hart was a director of new business and content at Y&R, formerly Young & Rubicam, which represents brands like Campbell Soup, Land Rover and Xerox. She had worked there since June 2007, according to her profile on LinkedIn, and quickly developed a reputation for working long hours while maintaining a spirit that knitted people together. "Suzanne was just one of the most wonderful people in the world," said Chad Kawalec, a former director of client services at Y&R.

"She was constantly trying to orchestrate teams of people who had never worked together, but she magically got them to work together."

Hart's father, Alex Hart, called her "the most marvelous daughter imaginable." "No father could have ever been more proud of her," He said by phone from his home in Florida, weeping as he

spoke. As of Wednesday night, investigators had not determined what had caused the malfunction

of the elevator, one of 13 at 285 Madison, a 28-story building that was built in 1926. Records from the

city's Department of Buildings show that there were 14 open violations involving the building's elevators, two of them dating to last year. But according to a spokesman for the agency, none of those violations were for hazardous conditions.

"This particular elevator was last inspected in June 2011, and no safety issues were found at that time and no conditions were found that would be related to this accident," the spokesman, Tony Sclafani, said. As rare as elevator accidents are, Kawalec said the elevators at the building were old and creaky. "They weren't the kind of elevators that you stuck your hand in to catch the doors," he said, "because they wouldn't stop." □



Firefighters leave a building where a woman was killed in an elevator accident in New York, on Dec. 14, 2011. The woman was stepping into the elevator when the door closed on her leg and the car shot up, pinning her between the floor of the elevator and the ceiling of the elevator entrance, authorities said.

(Hiroko Masuike/The New York Times)

## 'Lean on Me' actor arrested

PHOENIX (AP) — Authorities say "Lean on Me" actor Jermaine "Huggy" Hopkins has been arrested in Phoenix for trying to buy 200 pounds (91 kilograms) of marijuana from an undercover officer. Sheriff's detectives say the 38-year-old Hopkins was taken into custody Tuesday. Phoenix TV station KSAZ reports that detectives found 200 pounds of marijuana in his SUV and \$100,000 cash. Authorities later searched an Avondale apartment listed in Hopkins' name.

They say they found another 100 pounds (45 kilograms) of marijuana. Hopkins starred in the 1989 movie "Lean on Me" at 15 and has appeared on several TV shows. Hopkins lives in North Carolina. He's being held on \$35,000 bond on suspicion of two felony counts of possessing, transporting and trying to sell marijuana.

It was unclear Thursday whether Hopkins has legal representation yet. □



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# Italian appeals court says why it cleared Knox

**COLLEEN BARRY**  
**Associated Press**

**MILAN, Italy (AP)** — No murder weapon. Faulty DNA. No motive. Even the time of death was wrong by nearly an hour. The Italian appeals court that cleared Amanda Knox in the killing of her roommate explained its ruling on Thursday: The evidence just didn't hold up. In a 143-page document that criticized nearly every stage of the investigation that led to the conviction of Knox and her Italian boyfriend, Raffaele Sollecito, the appeals court said the lower court didn't even prove they were in the house when Knox's British roommate, Meredith Kercher, was killed. Kercher was found slain in a

pool of blood in the house she shared with Knox in the Italian city of Perugia. Knox and Sollecito, who had just begun dating, were arrested several days later, then convicted in what prosecutors portrayed as a drug-fueled sexual assault. They were sentenced to 26 years and 25 years, respectively, in proceedings that made headlines around the world. The Perugia appellate court, which acquitted the two in October after reviewing the lower court's evidence and conducting new hearings of its own, criticized the "building blocks" of the conviction and the failure to identify a motive. The guilty verdict "was not corroborated by any ob-



**Amanda Knox cries after hearing the verdict that overturns her conviction and acquits her of murdering her British roommate Meredith Kercher, at the Perugia court, Italy. The Italian appeals court that cleared Amanda Knox in the slaying of her British roommate gave the reasons for its ruling on Thursday, Dec. 15, 2011: the evidence that had been used by a lower court to convict the American and her Italian boyfriend of murder just didn't hold up.**

(AP Photo/Tiziana Fabi, Pool)

jective element of evidence and in itself was not, in fact, probable: the sudden choice of two young people, good and open to other people, to do evil for evil's sake, just like that, without another reason," wrote presiding Judge Claudio Pratillo Hellmann.

Still, the three-judge panel stopped short of saying what actually might have happened the night of Nov. 1, 2007. "It is not up to this court to speculate about what actually took place," Hellmann wrote, "or whether one or more people carried out the crime."

Knox's family said in a statement Thursday night that they were pleased with court's findings. □

## Putin:

## Foes are using protests to destabilize Russia

**MICHAEL SCHWIRTZ**

© 2011 New York Times

**MOSCOW** — Prime Minister Vladimir Putin of Russia delivered a mixed assessment Thursday of a growing protest movement against his government, praising a new class of young dissenters for standing up for their beliefs, while suggesting that they were being used as pawns by opposition leaders to destabilize the country.

"I see young, active people, clearly formulating their positions, and this makes me happy," Putin said in a televised Q-and-A program he holds annually. "If this is the result of the Putin regime, then great. But allowing yourselves to be pulled into some kind of scheme for destabilizing society is impermissible." They were his first detailed comments about the nascent protest movement, which culminated last weekend in a huge anti-



**Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin gestures during a national call-in TV show in Moscow, Russia, Thursday, Dec. 15, 2011. Putin said the results of Russia's parliamentary election reflected the people's will, and that the opposition had alleged vote fraud purely to strengthen its position.**

(AP Photo/RIA Novosti, Alexei Druzhinin)

Kremlin rally in Moscow that drew tens of thousands of people. The movement has posed the first major grassroots challenge to Putin's authority since he took power 12 years ago, and his government has not yet offered a clear strategy for

dealing with it. His remarks Thursday seemed in part to be an effort to pit the protesters against a motley collection of opposition politicians, writers, bloggers and others who have been trying to guide the movement. □



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## U.S. Prosecutor:

# Hezbollah laundered millions in US



Lebanese Hezbollah supporters shout slogans as they march during Ashoura day in Beirut's southern suburbs, Lebanon. Ashoura marks the anniversary of the death in the seventh century of the Prophet Muhammad's grandson Imam Hussein. U.S. Federal authorities blamed Lebanese financial institutions Thursday for wiring more than \$300 million into the United States in a money-laundering scheme they said used the U.S. financial system to benefit the militant group Hezbollah.

(AP Photo/Bilal Hussein)

## LARRY NEUMEISTER

## Associated Press

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Federal authorities blamed Lebanese financial institutions Thursday for wiring more than \$300 million into the United States in a money-laundering scheme they said used the U.S. financial system to benefit the militant group Hezbollah. The U.S. government said in the lawsuit filed in a Manhattan federal court that it seeks nearly a half-billion

dollars in money-laundering penalties from some Lebanese financial entities, 30 U.S. car buyers and a U.S. shipping company. It also said it's entitled to claim their assets as forfeitable under U.S. money-laundering laws.

Prosecutors said the \$300 million was wired from Lebanon to the United States and used to buy used cars and ship them to West Africa. They said Hezbollah money-laundering chan-

nels were used to ship proceeds from the car sales and narcotics trafficking back to Lebanon.

The accusations came two days after an indictment in federal court in Virginia accused fugitive Ayman Joumaa of leading a drug conspiracy that provided income for Hezbollah, an Iranian-backed Lebanese militant group that the U.S. has branded a terrorist organization.

A Washington-based Drug Enforcement Administration spokesman, Lawrence R. Payne, told The Associated Press in February that Joumaa's organization

laundered money using 50 used car lots in the United States. Cars were exported to Lebanon and West Africa.

U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara said the civil case brought Thursday reveals a massive international scheme in which Lebanese financial institutions, including banks and two exchange houses linked to Hezbollah, passed money through the U.S. financial system to launder narcotics trafficking and other criminal proceeds through West Africa and back into Lebanon.

The government said substantial portions of the cash

were paid to Hezbollah, which has been designated by the U.S. State Department as a terrorist organization since 1997.

"The intricate scheme laid out in today's complaint reveals the deviously creative ways that terrorist organizations are funding themselves and moving their money, and it puts into stark relief the nexus between narcotics trafficking and terrorism," Bharara said. "Today, we are putting a stranglehold on a major source of that funding by disrupting a vast and far-flung network that spanned three continents." □



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#### Friday Seafood Night

Soup of the Night: Seafood Chowder  
Chef's Carving: Salmon Wellington, in Puff Pastry with White Fish Mousse & Spinach, Lemon Caper Sauce  
Selected Entrees: Grouper Fillet Creole • Seafood Newburg • Garlic Shrimp • Chicken Curry  
Side Dishes: Jasmine Rice • Penne Pasta in Clam Sauce • Vegetable Medley • Fried Plantain



#### Saturday Prime Rib Night

Soup of the Night: Onion Soup  
Chef Carved: Slow Roasted, USA Prime Rib, au Jus  
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<b>THE SITTER</b> daily: 6:00 - 8:30 matinee: 11:00 late show: 11:00 <b>PG-13</b>	<b>THE SITTER</b> daily: 7:15 - 9:45 matinee: 12:00 late show: 12:00 <b>PG-13</b>

Matinee: fri - wed | Late show: fri & sat



# 3 bodies found at Mexican student group office

MARK STEVENSON

Associated Press

**MEXICO CITY (AP)** — Mexicans got a rare glimpse into the rough-and-tumble student organizations at many of Mexico's universities Thursday, after three bodies were found buried at one group's headquarters in the western city of Guadalajara.

The Jalisco state prosecutors office said it is investigating whether the bodies belong to any of five people who were reported missing after they complained last week that the student group was demanding protection money for allowing them to sell snacks outside a campus.

The bodies were discovered late Wednesday, two days after two college students in nearby Guerrero state were killed in a clash with police after student protesters hijacked buses, used them to block a highway and fought officers with rocks and sticks.

Highly organized, semi-formal and often violent groups are commonplace at Mexican universities. It is a phenomenon that dates back at least to the 1950s, but swelled during student radicalization in the 1960s. The organizations have become less ideological over the years, however, and are now often linked to, or protected by, political bosses known in Mexico as "caciques," or chieftains. The groups sometimes act

as enforcers to strong arm a politician's rivals, or free-lance in extortion or petty robbery.

Political analyst John Ackerman said Mexico's current political atmosphere, with tension heating up before the July presidential election and a lame-duck central government distracted by the fight against drug cartels, may have emboldened such local groups.

"Cacique power is alive and well in Mexico," said Ackerman, of the legal re-

search institute at Mexico's National Autonomous University. "This is another aspect in which democracy is still incomplete in Mexico."

The group involved in the discovery of the bodies is the Federation of Guadalajara Students. The FEG, as it is known, no longer has any formal ties to the university, but it operates at high schools affiliated with the university.

The FEG specialized in charging food and soft drink vendors to operate

around the high schools, according to one university official familiar with the group. While the group was once leftist, the FEG switched decades ago to supporting the Institutional Revolutionary Party, which ruled Mexico for 71 years before losing the presidency in 2000, said the official, who agreed to discuss the group only if not quoted by name because he wasn't authorized to speak about it.

Protection money was what

apparently prompted fried-dough vendor Armando Gomez, his son and three friends from high school to go to the FEG on Friday to try to negotiate down the FEG's demand for increased payments.

While prosecutors have not confirmed whether the bodies found belonged to any of the five, local media quoted an aunt of one of the missing boys as saying she had identified one of the bodies as that of her nephew. □

## Carlos the Jackal sentenced to life, again

PIERRE-ANTOINE

SOUCHARD

Associated Press

**PARIS (AP)** — Carlos the Jackal, the flamboyant Venezuelan who symbolized Cold War terrorism, was sentenced to life in prison — again — in a Paris trial that ended late Thursday with him rallying for revolution and weeping for Moammar Gadhafi.

Carlos, whose real name is Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, hasn't seen freedom since French agents spirited him out of Sudan in a sack in 1994.

He's already serving a life sentence in a French prison for a triple murder in 1975, the worst punishment meted out in a country that does not have the death penalty.

Once one of world's most-wanted men, the former



**Carlos the Jackal, the flamboyant Venezuelan who symbolized Cold War terrorism, was sentenced to life in prison — again — in a Paris trial that ended late Thursday with him rallying for revolution and weeping for Moammar Gadhafi.**

gun-for-hire and self-proclaimed revolutionary was escorted out of his cell and back to court last month to face charges that he instigated four bombings in France in 1982 and 1983 that killed 11 people and injured more than 140 others. Just before midnight Thursday, the court found

Ramirez guilty in all four attacks, and sentenced him to life in prison with no possibility of parole for 18 years. Combative and defiant throughout the six-week trial, the 62-year-old Ramirez denied any role in the attacks.

His lawyer and romantic partner, Isabelle Coutant-

Peyre, told The Associated Press that he will appeal. She said Ramirez was the victim of a politicized process and criticized investigators for using archives of former communist bloc countries to help in the prosecution.

Lawyers for the victims welcomed the long-awaited verdict, nearly three decades after the bloody bombings.

Ramirez sowed fear across Western European and Middle Eastern capitals during the Cold War, with believed ties to hijackings and killings for far-left and Palestinian terror groups. Ramirez, relishing the rare public attention at the Paris trial, used the defendants' stand as a pulpit and spoke for five hours Thursday in his final testimony. □

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# Canada oil pipeline into US gets extension support

**VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP)** — TransCanada Corp. said Thursday that it has received customer support to undertake an extension of its stalled Canada-to-Texas Keystone XL oil pipeline pending regulatory approval in the U.S.

Russ Girling, TransCanada's president and chief executive officer, said in a statement that the potential 50-mile (80 kilometer) expansion of the Keystone XL pipeline would increase the capacity of the pipeline to 830,000 barrels per day from 700,000 barrels. Instead of ending in Port Arthur, Texas, the pipeline will reach into the Houston market, known as the Houston Lateral, as well. That will more than double the U.S. Gulf Coast refining market capacity the pipeline can access if it's approved.

"This significant demand and additional long-term customer commitments confirm the continued strong shipper support of TransCanada and the need for Keystone XL to move forward," said Girling. "Proceeding with the extension of the Keystone XL system to Houston and increasing capacity on the pipeline system will further enhance the connection of a secure, growing and reliable supply of Canadian crude oil and domestic U.S. crude oil with the largest refining market in North America, while providing additional flexibility to our shippers," he added.

The Houston Lateral is within the original scope of the regulatory process that's currently under way, TransCanada said.

The U.S. State Department was originally set to announce its final decision by year-end, but in November said more time was needed to weigh a new route for the pipeline to take through Nebraska, in order to avoid environmentally sensitive areas.

The pipeline would carry oil from western Canada to refineries in Texas, passing through Montana, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas and Oklahoma and Houston if the expansion is approved.

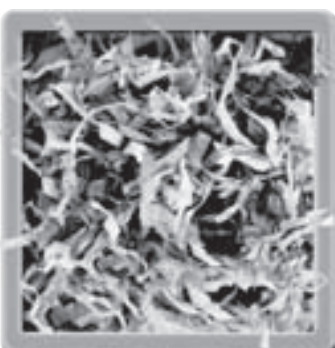
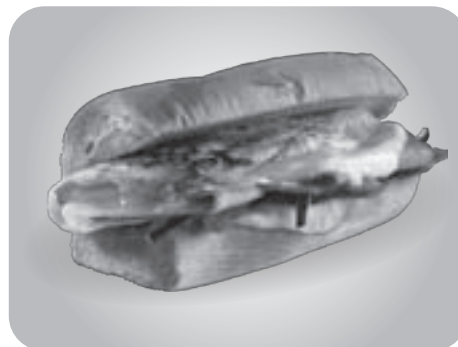


People protest the Keystone XL pipeline proposal. TransCanada Corp. said Thursday that it has received customer support to undertake an extension of its stalled Canada-to-Texas Keystone XL oil pipeline pending regulatory approval in the U.S.

proved. Montana officials on Thursday announced environmental approval for the pipeline. But TransCanada spokesman Shawn

Howard said there were no immediate plans to begin work in Montana while federal approval is pending. The State Department — which has final say because Keystone XL would cross an international border — now expects to make its decision in early 2013. If it's approved, TransCanada expects Keystone XL, including the Houston Lateral, to be in service by the end of 2014. □

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# Wage protection planned for home-care workers

STEVEN GREENHOUSE  
© 2011 New York Times

The Obama administration said Thursday that it would propose regulations to give the nation's nearly 2 million home-care workers minimum wage and overtime protection. Those workers have long been exempted from coverage.

Labor unions and advocates for low-wage workers have pushed for the changes, asserting that the 37-year-old exemption improperly swept these workers, who care for many elderly and disabled Americans, into the same "companion" category as baby

sitters. The administration's move calls for home-care aides to be protected under the Fair Labor Standards Act, the nation's main wage and hour law, as most other workers are. "The nearly 2 million in-home-care workers across the country should not have to wait a moment longer for a fair wage," President Barack Obama said in a statement.

"They work hard and play by the rules and they should see that work and responsibility rewarded." These workers, according to industry figures, generally earn \$8.50 to \$10 an



President Barack Obama makes an announcement regarding the "We Can't Wait" campaign at the White House in Washington, Dec. 14, 2011. The campaign, which aims to qualify nearly 2 million home care workers for federal wage and overtime protections, is one of several small-scale initiatives that does not require congressional approval that Obama has announced to stimulate the economy.

(Doug Mills/The New York Times)

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hour – around \$17,000 to \$20,000 a year – compared with the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour. In its announcement, the White House said 92 percent of these workers were women, nearly 30 percent were black and 12 percent Hispanic. Nearly 40 percent of them rely on public benefits like Medicaid and food stamps.

While industry experts say the overwhelming majority of today's home-care aides are paid at least the minimum wage, they also say that many do not receive a time-and-a-half premium when they work more than 40 hours a week.

"The job they do is a real job and they deserve the same basic rights as any other workers," said Steven Edel-

stein, national policy director of PHI PolicyWorks, a nonprofit group that seeks to improve conditions for home-care workers.

"This industry has one of the nation's fastest-growing work forces, and the challenge is to make these better jobs if we're trying to attract good people to come and provide the services."

Labor Secretary Hilda L. Solis has made clear for several months that she was considering updating decades-old regulations in several areas, including the home-care industry, where workers often provide services like tube feeding, wound care or assistance with physical therapy. The changes the administration is proposing will be subject

to 60 days of public comment.

In recent weeks, numerous Republican lawmakers have criticized the anticipated proposals, saying they would increase costs for federal and state programs as well as individuals. At a hearing last month, Rep. Tim Walberg, R-Mich., chairman of the House subcommittee on workforce protections, said, "Medicare and Medicaid expenses will likely increase as a result" of narrowing the companionship exemption. He added that the move was going to make senior citizens and their families "less able to afford home-care, which is typically paid not by insurance but by families themselves." □





## The Shoco Award of Excellence goes to Wichita Villacres of Eco Destination Management Company



**Oranjestad** – Aruba's Minister of Tourism, Transportation and Labour presented Wichita Villacres with the island's SHOCO National Award of Tourism 2011, for her pioneering spirit in the introduction of the MICE market to Aruba. Twenty-four years ago Villacres started her company ECO DMS here, with the desire to serve the group conventions and meetings market. Her young organization met success when the island of Aruba

was finally discovered by meeting planners who booked clients on incentive trips allowing ECO DMS the opportunity to make them unforgettable successes. While active in the tourist-market Villacres launched Aruba's first scholarship program for local students wishing to further their education in the tourism field. The Artousa scholarship was accompanied by an elaborate fundraising plan combined with an award program which rewarded

success in hospitality in the 90s. All along Villacres pushed and lobbied for the Society of Incentive Travel Executives, an international, non-profit, professional association exclusively devoted to the pursuit of excellence in incentive global market to hold its meetings in Aruba, as a way of introducing the island and all its treasures to top decision makers in the travel industry. Her dream came true two

years ago, when the SITE international Conference unfolded here with members of the Society of Incentive & Travel Executives came here for an important business forum.

Villacres also served as the SITE International co-chair for the meeting, entrusted with the organization of the events designed to showcase Aruba to the esteemed visitors, in collaboration with a local committee. The conference brought together the top minds in incentive travel, a multi-billion dollar global industry, which benefitted the island greatly.

The Minister outlined Villacres' achievement on behalf of the island as he presented her with the Shoco Award, named after the late Simon Oduber, an employee of the Aruba Tourism Authority who tirelessly worked to develop group travel to Aruba.

The Shoco is not the first accolade for ECO DMS who throughout its journey towards success delivered outstanding events and has been presented with some other prestigious industry awards

such as The IMA Circle of Excellence Award, which defines best practices in the development and execution of successful incentive programs, presented by Incentive Marketing Association, and two reputable SITE Crystal Awards both for outstanding and unique theme event creations, presented by the Site. Lastly, the Carlson Marketing Crystal Awards, for the "Outstanding Ovation Award" for the most creative DMC.

While in past years the Shoco recognitions were bestowed by the Aruba Hotel & Tourism Association, this year the awards were taken over by the Ministry of Tourism, Transportation and Labour, lending the program extra stature which accompanies official government citations. AHATA however remained as one of the proud main sponsors in conjunction with Digicel and Caribbean Mercantile Bank.

Pictured here The Minister, Otmar Oduber, Wichita Villacres, ECO DMS, also Bert Kamsteeg of BK Consult the recipient of another Shoco Award of Excellence for efforts in sustainability! □



# Vacation starts with an "oliebol" ...

**ORANJESTAD** - Thursday was the traditional start of the holidays for many people. School children celebrated their last school day just like construction workers who will be off for three weeks. For the workers building the new Super Food supermarket at the intersection of Sasaki highway and Bubali road it was the last work day as well, but this didn't go unnoticed. Super Food's Santa Claus accompanied by owner Mr. Jack Bult visited the job site to deliver warm "oliebollen" and beer to the construction workers. Super Food is well known for its delicious oliebollen prepared freshly every year. The workers received the opportunity to try some of these delicious treats. Oliebol fans take notice that the oliebol tent at Super Food will be serving up fresh oliebollen this Saturday from 10am to 6pm and Sunday from 10am to 5pm. Let your vacation, Christmas or New Year also start with an "oliebol." □



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## Service-minded Dayla Maduro is Mise en Place's Employee of the Month

**ORANJESTAD** - Dayla Maduro has been elected Mise en Place's Employee of the Month of December. She earned this honor not only because she is an excellent waitress who aims to please her guests by giving great service, but also because she goes beyond the expected. She volunteered, for instance, to help out during various promotional

events at newly opened Taste of Belgium in the Palm Beach Plaza. This, plus her happy outlook on life and on her job in particular, has earned her the title Employee of the Month.

Aruban Dayla speaks four languages: Papiamentu, Dutch, English and Spanish and she has been working in the restaurant business

since 1988.

Her favorite salad at Taste of Belgium is a healthy one: the Salade de légumes verts, a salad of crispy lettuce, marinated green olives, cucumbers, green peppers, green asparagus, green beans, tomatoes, spring onions and a herb dressing. Pabien, Dayla, with your new title of Employee of the Month! □



## Environmental Project at Secondary Schools



Turtugaruba is currently visiting all high schools on Aruba for the third year in a row. Every student of Ciclo Basico 2 will receive a booklet, "The story behind the barricades", especially designed by Turtugaruba and printed with financial support of Cede Aruba. The booklet tells us about

the Leatherback Sea Turtles that come to nest every year on Eagle Beach. It is illustrated with a lot of pictures of Aruba's turtle nesting beach and is written in Dutch/Papiamentu (an English/Spanish version also exists).

The presentation of the booklets at school is ac-

companied by a Power Point Presentation by one of the volunteers of Turtugaruba and the students have the opportunity to ask questions.

How many different turtle species visit Aruba to nest? And how often? Year round?

Four different species of sea

turtles are known to nest on Aruba and all four species do not nest year round, but have their own nesting season. The Leatherbacks lay eggs from March till July, followed by the Loggerhead, the Hawksbill and the Green turtle. On November 20th the last Green turtle nest of 2011 has hatched at

Dos Playa, Parke Arikok.

It will probably take till Carnival is over, before the first Leatherback females will arrive to nest. Please let us know if you observe any turtle activity on the beach. Call Turtle Hotline: 5929393. For more information: turtugaruba@hotmail.com □





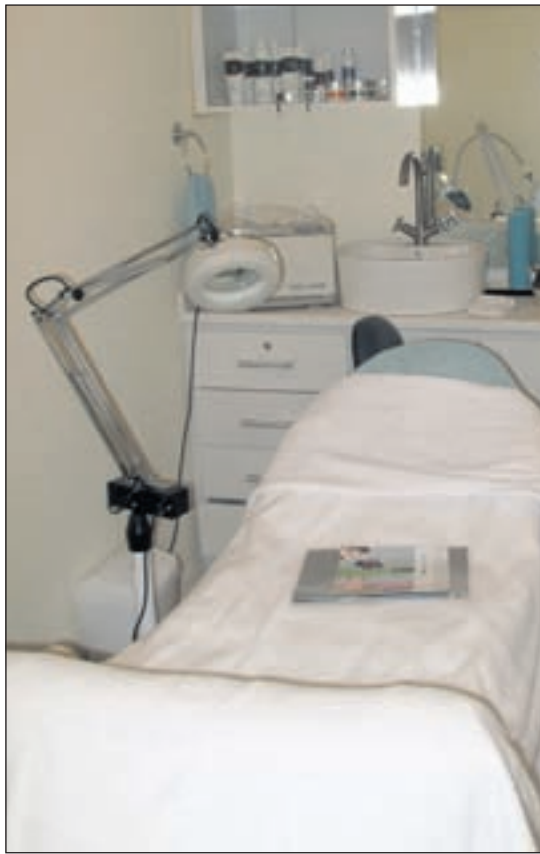
# La Vie Med Spa invites you to Look Your BEST this Holiday Season

**Palm Beach** – La Vie Med Spa located just above the Hard Rock Café at South Beach Centre is introducing Gelac UV Gel Polish, the Must Have 14-Day Manicure.

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# GALAXY STAR

*Donovan returns to Everton on 2-month loan*

In this June 11, 2011, file photo, USA's Landon Donovan dribble the ball during a CONCACAF Gold Cup soccer match against Panama in Tampa, Fla.

Associated Press  
Page 18



England's Luke Donald celebrates after he wins the Race to Dubai of European Championship tour of 2011 in final round of Dubai World Championship golf tournament on Sunday, Dec. 11, 2011 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Associated Press

## Top-ranked Luke Donald wins European

### Tour award

STEVE DOUGLAS

AP Sports Writer

**LONDON (AP)** — Luke Donald added yet another prize to his glittering list of honors for 2011, picking up the European Tour's Golfer of the Year award on Thursday.

Shedding his "under-achiever" tag, the 34-year-old Englishman won three titles on the European Tour and finished in the top 10 in 20 of his 26 tournaments worldwide, helping him become the first player to officially win money lists on both sides of the Atlantic.

Two days after becoming the first Englishman to be voted the PGA Tour's Player of the Year since the inaugural award in 1990, Donald picked up the European equivalent for the first time.

"It was good to see all the hard work I have put in coming to fruition," Donald said.

Continued on Page 19



# U.S. looks for another Duel win against Europeans

PAUL NEWBERRY

AP Sports Writer

**ATLANTA (AP)** — Duel in the Pool? More like Slaughter in the Water.

The United States hasn't come close to losing one of these every-other-year dual meets since they were launched in 2003 as a way to build interest in swimming during non-Olympic years.

Even with Michael Phelps back home in Baltimore, focusing on training for next summer's London Games, Brendan Hansen doesn't expect anything to change when the powerful Americans take on a European all-star team Friday and Saturday at the Georgia Tech Aquatic Center.

"It's hard for me to believe we can lose the way this team feeds off each other," Hansen said after a practice session Thursday morning at the same pool that hosted the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.

"When we start rolling at a meet like this, it's a slippery slope. The meet is over a lot sooner than you think, then we're just racing each other."

USA Swimming has assembled a daunting group



Rebecca Soni gets out of the pool after winning the women's 200-meter breaststroke at the U.S. Winter Nationals swim meet on Saturday, Dec. 3, 2011, in Atlanta.

Associated Press

that features Ryan Lochte — the star of this year's world championships — along with Olympic gold medalists Hansen, Natalie Coughlin, Rebecca Soni, Dana Vollmer and Amanda Beard. The next wave of American stars is led by 16-year-old Missy Franklin, who captured three golds and five medals overall at worlds.

"You need those people

who've been to the Olympics, who've been on the podium," Coughlin said. "But you also need those youngsters, who are so excited just to be there."

The Europeans faced a challenge assembling a competitive team, given all the politics and differing objectives of the various national federations. Germany and Russia contributed only one swimmer

apiece, and the powerhouse French squad isn't participating at all.

Still, there's quite a mix — 41 swimmers from 18 nations, including world champions Daniel Gyurta of Hungary and Lotte Friis and Jeanette Ottesen of Denmark.

"Try having a team meeting," quipped Markus Rogan, a two-time Olympian from Austria. "It's very interesting, communications-

wise."

The Americans easily beat Australia at the first three duels, then routed a European team 185-78 two years ago.

"Even though we don't even know everybody's name, we all have a common goal," Rogan said. "Everybody wants to beat the Americans."

British star Gemma Spofforth predicts the score will be a lot tighter than past years, since so many of her teammates are coming off the European short-course championships. The same format will be used at Georgia Tech, where a giant grandstand has been erected over the half of the full-length pool that won't be used.

"It looks like a lot of the Europeans are in top shape and ready to go fast," she said. "I think it's going to be very, very close. Someone who finishes third or fourth could make the difference."

By comparison, most of the Americans are in the midst of rigorous training regimens, so they won't be in their best racing form. Lochte swam a staggering 6,000 meters during his practice session Thursday — a routine that is geared toward having him in top form for London, not Atlanta.

"I don't know what to expect," he said. "But it's a great opportunity to race, no matter what condition I'm in."

Phelps passed on the chance to race in Atlanta. His coach, Bob Bowman, said the 14-time Olympic gold medalist was best served finishing out the year training at home and taking part in one local meet, given a busy fall schedule that included two European meets and high-altitude training in Colorado.

At worlds, Lochte surpassed Phelps as the world's most dominant swimmer, beating his fellow American in their two head-to-head races. But, much like any golf tournament that doesn't include Tiger Woods, the absence of Phelps takes some of the luster off this meet. □

## Donovan returns to Everton on 2-month loan

**CARSON, California (AP)** — Landon Donovan is returning to Everton on a two-month loan.

The Los Angeles Galaxy made the announcement Thursday, giving the Toffees some attacking help as they try to climb the standings after a slow start. Everton is 12th in the English Premier League and has just 15 goals in 14 league matches.

"I am delighted that we have managed to get Landon back. He will give us some good experience," Everton manager David Moyes said. "He did well for us when he was over two years ago and hopefully will return with those same qualities. His season has just finished and like last time we need him to hit the ground running because the games come thick and fast at this time of year."



In this Nov. 20, 2011 file photo, Los Angeles Galaxy forward Landon Donovan holds up the MLS Cup after they won their championship soccer match against the Houston Dynamo in Carson, Calif. The Galaxy won 1-0.

Associated Press

Donovan will be available to play starting with the Jan. 4 home match against Bolton and will stay through the Feb. 25 Merseyside derby at Liverpool.

He scored two goals in 13 matches during a loan to Everton from January to

March in 2010.

"The opportunity to return to Everton and play for such a well-respected club and a manager that I hold in such high regard was something that was simply too good to pass up," the 29-year-old midfielder and forward

said. "I thoroughly enjoyed my time at Everton in 2010 and I'm hopeful that we can experience similar success this time around."

Donovan scored 16 goals in 34 games for the Galaxy this year, including the one that won the MLS Cup final against Houston last month. He is to return to the Galaxy on Feb. 26, ahead of the first leg of their CONCACAF Champions League quarterfinal against Toronto.

"This is a great opportunity for Landon," Galaxy coach Bruce Arena said. "During the final months of the 2011 season he was limited because of an ongoing injury, and he just started to get his legs back during the playoffs."

Therefore, I think that this opportunity with Everton comes at a perfect time as he is rested and ready to go." □



Luke Donald  
Continued from Page 17

"I was delighted with my game this year and it is rewarding to feel that, sometimes, consistency does pay off. "Everyone dreams of having a year like this and I am very excited and feel fortunate that it happened to me." Donald received the most votes from a judging panel featuring golf journalists and commentators to beat 2011 major winners Darren Clarke, Rory McIlroy and Charl Schwartzel.

A first major title remains elusive — he tied for fourth at the Masters and tied for eighth at the PGA Championship — but Donald won over his critics in 2011 by capturing four tournaments worldwide. After beating Martin Kaymer 3 & 2 in the final of Match Play Championship in Arizona in February, Donald defeated Lee Westwood in a playoff to win the BMW PGA Championship at Wentworth, the European Tour's flagship event, to supplant his compatriot as the world's top-ranked player.

He warmed up for the British Open in Sandwich by winning the Scottish Open title, finishing a truncated tournament at 19 under after three rounds, but missed the cut at Royal St. George's the following week. His fourth title of the year was arguably his most impressive, producing a stunning closing-round 64 — featuring six straight birdies on the back nine — to win the Children's Miracle Network Hospitals Classic. The victory in the last event on the PGA Tour saw him overtake Webb Simpson to finish at the top of the money list in the United States. Donald sealed the European Tour's money list title last week, ahead of McIlroy, by finishing third at the Dubai World Championship.

"The manner in which I came through to win both money lists was, I think, the thing that pleased me the most about the season," Donald said. "Going to Florida and winning that tournament when I had to was very important as it gave me the incentive to go on and succeed in Dubai." □

## NHL Roundup

# Blackhawks edge Wild in shootout

ST. PAUL, Minnesota (AP)

— A shootout victory gave the Chicago Blackhawks their fifth straight road win, 4-3 over the Minnesota Wild on Wednesday in a clash of the top two teams in the NHL Western Conference. Patrick Kane and Jonathan Toews scored in the shootout, while Toews also gave Chicago the lead in the third period only for Mikko Koivu to make it 3-3 a few minutes later and send the game to overtime.

Marian Hossa and Michael Frolik had given the Blackhawks a 2-0 lead with second-period goals 89 seconds apart, but Kyle Brodziak and Matt Cullen answered for the Wild later in the period to tie the game. The Wild lead the NHL with 44 points. The Blackhawks, who are 7-1-1 in their past nine games, have 42.



Phoenix Coyotes right wing Shane Doan, center, falls to the ice on the face-off as Anaheim Ducks left wing Matt Beleskey, left, takes it along with center Brandon McMillan during the third period of their NHL hockey game, Wednesday, Dec. 14, 2011, in Anaheim, Calif. The Ducks won 4-1.

Associated Press

### BRUINS 5, SENATORS 2

In Ottawa, Tim Thomas made 47 saves to help Boston down Ottawa and make it three straight wins. Daniel Paille scored twice, Rich Peverley had a goal and an assist and Chris Kelly

and Patrice Bergeron also scored for Boston, which moved atop the Eastern Conference standings.

The Bruins have gone 17-2-1 since Nov. 1, when they launched a 10-game winning streak with a win over

Ottawa.

Daniel Alfredsson and Jason Spezza each had a goal and an assist for the Senators.

### DUCKS 4, COYOTES 1

In Anaheim, Niklas Hagman scored twice as Anaheim beat struggling Phoenix.

Jonas Hiller made 19 saves, Rod Pelley scored in his Anaheim debut and Kyle Palmieri added his first goal of the season for the Ducks, who climbed out of last place in the overall NHL standings.

Martin Hanzal scored for Phoenix's NHL-worst power-play unit but the Coyotes lost to their Pacific Division rivals for the first time in five games.

**In other NHL games it was Chicago 4, Minnesota 3, SO; Boston 5, Ottawa 2; and Anaheim 4, Phoenix 1.** □

## Flyers' Pronger out for rest of season

MONTREAL (AP) — Philadelphia Flyers captain Chris Pronger will miss the rest of the NHL season because of severe post-concussion syndrome.

The Canadian veteran missed six games earlier this season after taking a brutal hit to the face with a stick during a game against Toronto on Oct. 24. He was sidelined again after undergoing knee surgery last month. Pronger visited concussion specialists in Pittsburgh on Wednesday after complaining of a fairly persistent headache and sluggish feeling.

Flyers general manager Paul Holmgren said during Philadelphia's game against Montreal on Thursday that Pronger was suffering from severe post-concussion syndrome and the doctors advised he sit out the remainder of the season. □

# Singler prefers extra year in Spain to NBA move

MARK WALSH  
Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — Former Duke forward Kyle Singler is in no rush to start his NBA career, saying Thursday he decided to sign with Real Madrid because of the quality of basketball in Spain.

While other NBA players flock back to the United States with the lockout finally over, Singler has opted to stay in Europe to continue his development. Singler was taken by the Detroit Pistons with the No. 33 pick in the draft. He had been playing with Spanish team Lucentum Alicante during the lockout.

"I thought here in Spain there was good basketball to be played. There was no rush to go to the NBA and play there," Singler said at his official presentation with Madrid. "I wanted to come here and play for Madrid, play for a great club and next year have the opportunity to go to the NBA."

Moving to the Spanish

capital has given Singler the chance to play in the Euroleague, where he debuted on Wednesday and scored eight points in 24 minutes in Madrid's 101-83 win over Partizan.

Singler, however, said the Pistons were eager for him to return.

"I haven't talked to them very much but when I decided to stay I know they were a little disappointed," Singler said. "But I wasn't really focused on that, I was making a decision that was best for me."

Madrid will look to Singler to fill the gap left by Spanish forward Rudy Fernandez, who has returned to the NBA with Denver. Madrid has also lost Serge Ibaka, who jumped back to Oklahoma City after the lockout ended.

"I'm not intimidated," Singler said. "Rudy is a great player from Spain. I'm not coming in here to fill his spot, I just want to be the player I am. I just love to win and that's what I'm going to try to bring to the club."



Basketball player Kyle Singler holds up his new team vest during his official presentation for Real Madrid, in Madrid Thursday Dec. 15, 2011.

Associated Press

Singler was the NCAA Final Four MVP for Duke in 2010, helping the program win its fourth national title.

His next challenge will be picking up the language in Spain.

"I can understand more than I can speak," the American forward said. "I hope I can improve my Spanish. It's not very good." □



# Skiers collecting data for air bag safety system

**ANDREW DAMPF**

**AP Sports Writer**

**VAL GARDENA, Italy (AP)**

— When overall World Cup leader Aksel Lund Svindal and downhill world champion Erik Guay navigate the tricky Saslong course at super-fast speeds this week, they will be also be collecting data for a radical air bag system that could have a big impact on safety in skiing.

The World Cup circuit has been ravaged by a series of life-threatening injuries in recent seasons, prompting the International Ski Federation to get together with Italian manufacturer Dainese and start work on an air bag system that has already been in use in motorcycle racing since 2009.

FIS is allowing Dainese to outfit 10 athletes that it sponsors this week with special chips lodged in their back protectors that will record speed, angular rotation, acceleration and other information.

"We're just starting to collect data at this point," said Alessandro Bellatti, the Dainese engineer who is coordinating the project. "It's a more difficult project than the one for MotoGP but we're fairly confident we can come up with something for most of the serious crashes."

In motorcycle racing, the air bag system inflates when the body leaves the bike with a forward rotation, whereas in skiing the exact moment when a

racer loses complete control varies from one crash to another.

Finding the exact algorithm to determine that point of no return is a major challenge, but Dainese is confident it can come up with a working product for the 2013-14 season — in time for the 2014 Sochi Olympics. "The problem is that whereas in MotoGP we can gather data from 1,000 laps from 10 drivers in a single week-end, with skiing we only get 40 runs to work with," Bellatti said as he watched racers charge down the hill.

Dainese will continue its research at most of the downhill races this season.

"Alessandro is a smart guy," Svindal said. "He's got some crazy algorithms go-

ing on in his computer, so he definitely knows what he's doing. But it's fairly complicated.

"In a motor bike it was probably easier to rule out what is not possible. Like if the body is in this position it's over," Svindal added, turning his head nearly upside down. "I think for us, looking at some of the still photos around with gnarly positions, it could be a tough challenge."

Other athletes wearing the chips include super-G world champion Christof Innerhofer of Italy, Jan Hudec of Canada and Kjetil Jansrud of Norway.

The chips are turned on by connecting two wires coming out of the back protectors.

"It looks like two shoelaces sticking out of the back, and they come around front and you connect them, a light goes off, tuck it back in and away you go," Guay said.

If only avoiding crashes were so easy.

In 2008, American downhiller Scott Macartney suffered brain injuries and was kept in an induced coma after losing control and smashing his head on the final jump of the treacherous Streif course in Kitzbuehel, Austria.

The next year, Daniel Albrecht of Switzerland suffered life-threatening brain and lung injuries after a crash in the same exact spot.

Hans Grugger is still working his way back after yet another horrific crash in Kitzbuehel in downhill training last season, while Austrian teammate Matthias Lanzinger had his left lower leg amputated three years ago after crashing in Kvitfjell, Norway.

And those are only the worst crashes. Each season, numerous racers suffer mild concussions and the list of torn knees is seemingly endless.

Three-time overall World Cup winner Lindsey Vonn had to pull out midway through last season's world championships after injuring her head slightly in training and American

downhiller Marco Sullivan missed the second half of last season after a similar fall.

Sullivan and other racers would like to see more safety development in helmets. "You see we're all wearing these super-aerodynamic tiny helmets but that's been the real catastrophic injuries the past few years, kind of one every year," said Sullivan, a 10-year veteran of the World Cup circuit.

"It's downhill skiing and there's going to be crashes, so if you can protect your melon a little better that's big," Sullivan added. "It would obviously take thicker helmets, and I think all the athletes would conform to that because if everyone is wearing them you're not losing out on the aerodynamics."


FIS men's World Cup race director Gunter Hujara noted that there are new approval standards for downhill and super-G helmets this season, and added that former World Cup standout Pernilla Wiberg is heading a FIS working group involving scientists at universities in Oslo, Stockholm and Innsbruck, Austria, to develop new helmet standards.

"They will analyze most of the falls we've had in the past to find the new specification, maybe, for future helmets," he said. "We are very busy."




Svindal had a gruesome crash in 2007 in Beaver Creek, Colorado, and believes an air bag system might have prevented some of the injuries to his face, ribs and back. Although he wonders if it will do enough.

"When you see those crashes, like Grugger in Kitzbuehel, when you land and hook an edge like that at 120 kph (75 mph), it's a matter of a hundredth of a second until the head is hitting the snow, so will (an air bag) have time to (inflate)?" Svindal asked.

"With a car, the engine and hood can compress before an air bag goes out, so you delay (the) process until impact hits you," Svindal added. "But with a helmet this thick, there's no time. □"



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## Amir Khan makes appeal following loss to Peterson

**LONDON (AP)** — British boxer Amir Khan is hoping to secure a rematch with Lamont Peterson after launching an appeal against the judges' scoring in his split-decision loss to the American in their light-welterweight title fight.

"We'll find out in the next five to seven days if the decision is overturned," Khan told Sky Sports News on Thursday. "If that's the case, I will give him a rematch to settle the score." The 25-year-old Englishman lost his WBA and IBF titles in the defeat in Washington on Saturday after being deducted points on two occasions for pushing.

International Boxing Federation President Daryl Peoples confirmed to The Associated Press that Khan's camp has also appealed against referee Joseph Cooper's decision to deduct points.

"We have just asked Golden Boy Promotions for a DVD of the tape so I can review it with the Championships Chairman (Lindsey Tucker)," Peoples said.

Khan claimed the scorecards were changed before the results were read out by the ring announcer. "I got told I won the fight by someone at Golden Boy Promotions who had seen the scorecards, and (ring announcer) Michael Buffer said the same thing to me, before they were taken off him and changed," Khan said. "It's never taken so long after a fight."



Amir Khan, of England, left, hangs on the ropes against Lamont Peterson, right, during a boxing match, Sunday, Dec. 11, 2011, in Washington.

Associated Press

The 2004 Olympic silver medalist also said he only resorted to pushing Peterson because his opponent was constantly leading with his head.

"Every time he came in with his head, the best thing was for me to push him away," Khan said. "In the rule book, there's no warning for pushing — especially points deducted — and I got two points deducted. "I was treated unfairly, and I'm sure we can get a rematch and we can have a neutral referee and neutral judges."

Khan's second professional loss dealt a setback to his hopes of moving up to welterweight ahead of a potential fight against Floyd Mayweather Jr., the unbeaten WBC champion. "This has only put me back three to six months because hopefully I'll get the rematch with Peterson and beat him," Khan said. "Maybe it's happened for a reason. It's given me an extra fight, given me more experience and made me a lot wiser and I'll be a lot more mature when I fight Mayweather." □

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## US to adopt strict new limits on chimp research

**LAURAN NEERGAARD**

**AP Medical Writer**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Days

in the laboratory are numbered for chimpanzees, humans' closest relative.

Chimps paved astronauts' way into space and were vital in creating some important medicines.

But the U.S. government said Thursday that science has advanced enough that from now on, chimpanzees essentially should be a last resort in medical research — a move that puts the United States more in line with the rest of the world. Chimps' similarity with people "demands special consideration and respect," said Dr. Francis Collins, director of the National Institutes of Health.

His move came after the prestigious Institute of Medicine declared that most use of chimpanzees for invasive medical research no longer can be justified — and that strict new limits should determine which experiments are important enough to outweigh the moral cost of involving this species that is so like us.

"The bar is very high," said bioethicist Jeffrey Kahn of Johns Hopkins University,

who led the institute panel.

The group stopped short of recommending an outright ban, saying a handful of research projects today might still require chimps — but more importantly, that the animals might be required in the future as new diseases evolve and emerge. Animal welfare groups welcomed the change but continue to push for Congress to pass legislation that would go a step further and phase out all invasive chimp research.

"Chimpanzees have provided limited value in research settings, and now alternative methods have been developed that will make their use all but obsolete," said Wayne Pacelle, president of the Humane Society of the United States. But some scientists say it's not that big a change because chimp studies already were dwindling fast as researchers turned to less costly and ethically charged alternatives. "The use of a chimpanzee in biomedical research is the rare exception," said Dr. Thomas Rowell, who directs Louisiana's New Iberia Research Center, one of five research



**The Institute of Medicine stopped short of recommending the outright ban that animal rights activists had pushed. Instead, it urged strict limits that would make invasive experiments with chimps essentially a last resort, saying today's more advanced research tools mean the primates' use only rarely will be necessary enough to outweigh the moral costs.**

(AP Photo, File)

centers that houses chimps and other primate species used in both government-

and privately financed studies.

It is not clear exactly how

many of the nation's 937 research chimps — 612 of them owned by the NIH — are in the midst of experiments that would be affected by the new standards and could be moved into retirement instead.

Most of the chimps are fairly old, as the nation has had a moratorium on breeding since 1995. But Collins temporarily barred new government-funded studies involving chimps as his agency began implementing the recommended restrictions. Also, a working group will decide whether to phase out about 37 ongoing projects, about half of which Collins said probably don't meet the new standards. These apes' genetic closeness to humans — the genome is about 99 percent identical to ours — has long caused a quandary, making the animals valuable to medical researchers for nearly a century but also sparking ethical and emotional questions about how they are housed and used.

"They are highly intelligent. They live in complex social settings, and they live for a very long time," said evolutionary anthropologist Anne Pusey of Duke University, who once worked with chimp expert Jane Goodall in Tanzania and manages an archive of Goodall's field data on the animals.

"When you enclose a chimp in a very small cage for 50 years, it really is cruel and unusual, even regardless of whether you're doing invasive things to them," she added. □

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## Report: Many people don't trust online information

**BARBARA ORTUTAY**  
**AP Technology Writer**  
**NEW YORK (AP)** — Over the

past decade, Americans have witnessed the rise of social networks and mobile technology that's put the Internet at an arm's reach, day and night. Yet a new study has found that people are even more distrustful of the information they find online.

Three-quarters of Internet users find the Web an important source of information, but most people still don't deem the content they see online reliable, according to a report out this week from the University of Southern California's Center for the Digital Future.

In 2010, 15 percent of Internet users said they find only a small portion of online information reliable. That's greater than the 7 percent who were likewise skeptical of the vast majority of information they come across on the Internet.

The mistrust is especially true for social networks. That said, people don't look to social networks for reliability. Rather, they visit the sites to socialize and share photos, updates and videos.

Trust grows when it comes to established media outlets and government websites. In 2010, 79 percent of Internet users said they found content posted on government websites reliable, about the same as in 2003, the first year the center looked at that question. Jeff Cole, director of the Center for the Digital Future, said Americans tend to be more trusting of government and big media.

"Other countries are better at distinguishing good information from (the) unreliable," he said. In repressive regimes where media is

closely tied to the government, citizens grow adept at filtering truth from propaganda.

When it comes to privacy online, Americans are actually more concerned about businesses than the government, the report found. Nearly half of U.S. Internet users said they are worried about companies watching what they do online, compared with 38 percent who said the same for the government.

Looking ahead to the next decade, Cole expects tablet computers and other touch-screen devices to largely replace personal computers and with them, the clunky computer mouse. □



In this May 24, 2011 file photo, a product specialist holds up a new Nook during a news conference, in New York. The Barnes & Noble's Nook Simple Touch has two advantages: it doesn't display advertising, and it can load books from other book stores, like Google.

Associated Press

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## Better manufacturing, jobs news send stocks higher

**BERNARD CONDON**

**AP Business Writer**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Investors shifted their attention from Europe to the U.S. on Thursday, pushing stocks slightly higher on good jobs and manufacturing reports.

The Dow Jones industrial average rose 45.33 points, or 0.4 percent, to 11,868.81. The Dow had lost 360 points over the past three days on worries that Europe's latest plan to keep its currency union intact would fail.

Jack Ablin, chief investment officer at Harris Bank, said the break from selling meant that investors are starting to focus on signs of strength in the U.S. economy. "We're not completely insulated (from Europe), but trouble there doesn't necessary spell problems

for us," he said.

Before the market opened, the government reported that the number of people applying for unemployment

benefits dropped sharply last week to 366,000, the fewest level since May 2008. That's a sign that layoffs are easing, a first step

toward bringing down the unemployment rate, which currently stands at 8.6 percent.

Investors were also encouraged by report from the Federal Reserve of New York that its index measuring regional manufacturing jumped to the highest level since May. That was far more than economists were expecting. A similar report from the Philadelphia branch of the Fed also increased faster than analysts anticipated.

"The base of the economy is getting stronger," said Steven Malin, an associate at money manager Aronson Johnson Ortiz.

FedEx Corp. reported that its quarterly income nearly doubled on strong growth

in online shopping during the holiday season. FedEx is seen as a bellwether for the economy. Its stock jumped 8 percent.

The Standard & Poor's 500 rose 3.94 points, or 0.3 percent, to 1,215.76. The gains were broad. All but two of the 10 industry groups in the index rose. The two groups — technology and energy — edged down less than 0.3 percent each.

The biggest gains came from utilities and health care. The profits of those companies are less likely to crumble in an economic slowdown. That suggests that investors, though encouraged by the good news Thursday, were still playing it safe.

"There's a defensive tone to the market," said Jeff Schwarte, a portfolio manager at Principal Global Investors. "Investors still aren't sure about the economy." The Nasdaq rose 1.70 points, less than 0.1 percent, to 2,541.01.

In corporate news, Michael Kors Holdings Ltd. jumped 21 percent to \$24.20 on its first day of trading. The initial public offering valued the fashion design company at \$3.8 billion.

Novellus Systems Inc. jumped 16 percent. The semiconductor equipment maker said late Wednesday that it was being acquired by rival Lam Research Corp. Lam fell 8 percent.

Rite Aid Corp. rose 3.5 percent. The drugstore chain announced that losses had narrowed in its third quarter. European markets rose slightly, a day after big declines, as an auction of Spanish government bonds drew strong demand from investors. Germany's DAX rose 1 percent; France's main stock index rose 0.6 percent. □



**Trader Gregory Rowe works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange Thursday, Dec. 15, 2011. Strong earnings from FedEx and a sharp drop in claims for unemployment benefits sent stocks higher in early trading Thursday.**

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)





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# U.S. unemployment claims at lowest in 3 1/2 years

**CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER**  
**AP Economics Writer**  
**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The U.S. job market is healthier than at any time since the end of the Great Recession. The number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits fell last week to the lowest since May 2008, a sign that the waves of corporate layoffs that have defined the past few years are all but over.

The number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits fell last week to the lowest since May 2008, a sign that the waves of corporate layoffs that have defined the past few years are all but over. "This is unexpectedly great news," said Ian Shepherdson, an economist at High Frequency Economics. It will take an additional step — robust hiring, not just the end of layoffs — to bring the 8.6 percent unemployment rate down significantly. Experts say that won't happen until businesses are more confident about customer demand. And the European debt crisis could still cause dam-



**Stephen Rutkowski, a chiropractor from Greenwich, Conn., waits in line to attend a job fair sponsored by National Career Fairs, in New York. The number of people seeking unemployment aid dropped to its lowest level since May 2008 last week, a hopeful sign that layoffs are declining and hiring may pick up.**

(AP Photo/Mark Lennihan)

age here. But the report on unemployment claims Thursday was the latest to suggest that the economy, two and a half slow years after the official end of the recession, may finally be picking up momentum. The nation added 100,000

or more jobs every month from July through November, the first such streak since 2006. And the economy, which was barely growing when the year started, has picked up speed each quarter. More small businesses plan to hire than at any time in

three years, a trade group said this week. And another private-sector survey found more companies are planning to add workers than at any time since 2008. The number of people applying for unemployment benefits came in at 366,000, down from 385,000 the week before. Applications are nearing their pre-recession level of about 325,000. The last time claims were so low, the nation was six months into the recession

but didn't know it yet. The unemployment rate was 5.4 percent — a level almost hard to imagine these days. Unemployment has been above 8 percent for almost three years. That spring of 2008, Bear Stearns, an investment house that predated the Depression, had been hobbled by its investment in subprime mortgages and was sold near collapse to JPMorgan Chase for a paltry \$10 a share. □

## Europe's troubled banks face a growing squeeze

**PALLAVI GOGOI**  
**SARAH DILORENZO**  
**AP Business Writers**  
**PARIS (AP)** — Europe's banks are being squeezed from all sides. They're holding risky government debt. They're struggling to get loans to operate. They're paying higher rates when they do borrow. And regulators want them to build bigger cushions against bad loans. The banks share the blame for Europe's debt crisis. They enabled governments to pile up too much debt. But they also provide the grease that keeps an economy running. Without them, there can be no recovery. A flurry of ominous news for Europe's banks has fueled fears about the ability of some to survive the crisis. Many are also concerned that the banks will choke off money to the continent's economy just as it's struggling to eke out growth.



**Klaus Masuch of the European Central Bank, right, and European Commission official Matthias Mors leave the Prime's minister office in Athens, on Thursday 15, 2011. Greek Prime Minister Lucas Papademos, was meeting with Greece's debt inspectors from the International Monetary Fund, European Central Bank and European Commission, collectively known as the troika. The country is negotiating the terms of a second massive rescue package, worth 130 billion Euro (\$169 billion), with the eurozone and private bondholders.**

(AP Photo/Petros Giannakouris)

The credit ratings of five large European banks were downgraded this week. Speculation is rising that Commerzbank, Germany's second-largest bank, might need to be nationalized. Others, like UBS and Credit Agricole, are preparing waves of layoffs. Last week, leaders from more than two dozen European countries crafted an agreement that would force countries to submit their budgets for review and limit the deficits they could run. The goal is to prevent another debt crisis. Yet since then, doubts have grown over whether that deal will be effective — or even enacted. European stocks have slid 2 percent. Borrowing costs for Italy and Spain remain at levels considered unsustainable. The rising uncertainty about whether the crisis can be resolved is having a direct impact on the banks: They're lending less to one another for fear of never being repaid. □

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**NEW YEAR'S EVE**

Halle Berry Ashton Kutcher

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Asa Butterfield Jude Law

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NEW THIS WEEK

**The Sitter**

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James McAvoy Hugh Laurie

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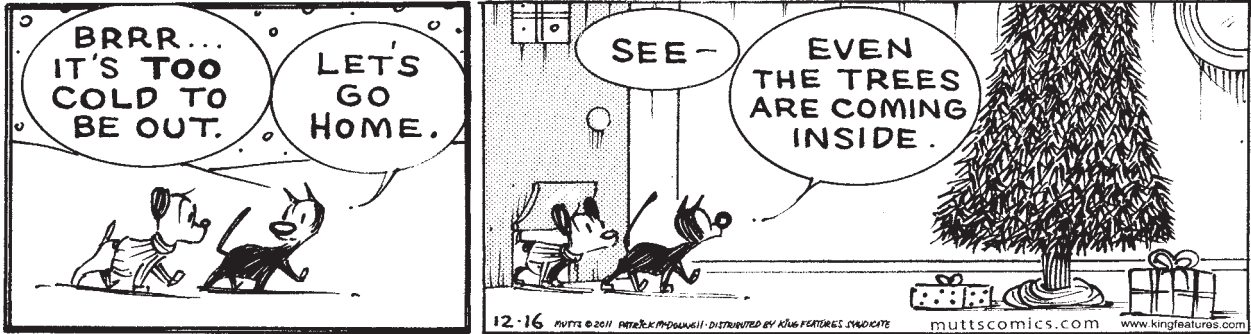
Adam Sandler Katie Holmes

Thurs 9:15  
Fri - Sat 9:15 / 11:15  
Sun - Wed & Hol 9:15

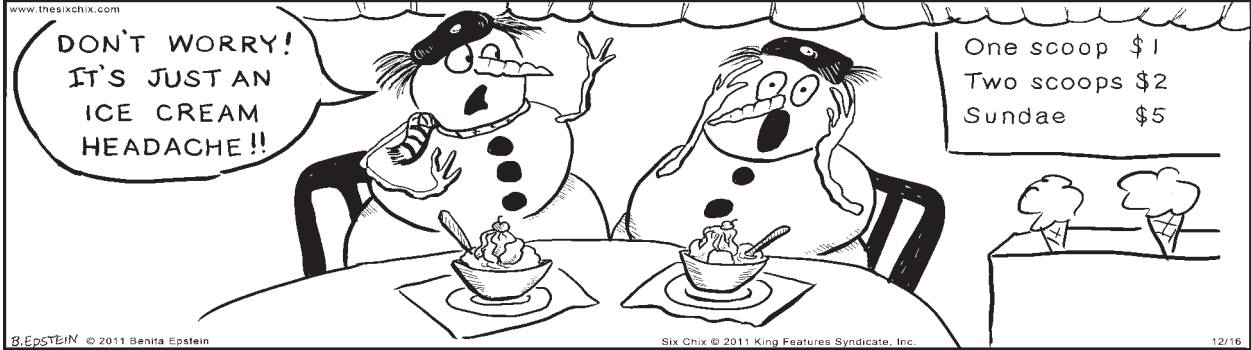
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Mutts



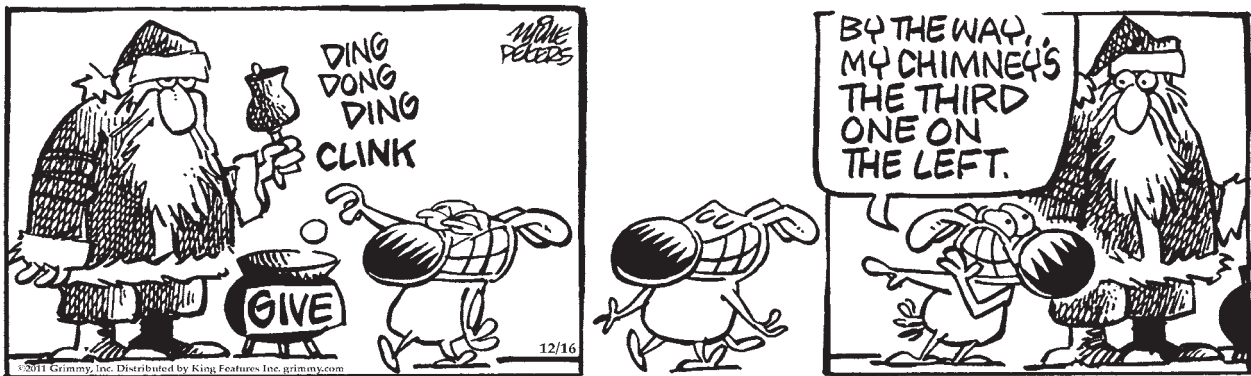
6 Chix



Blondie



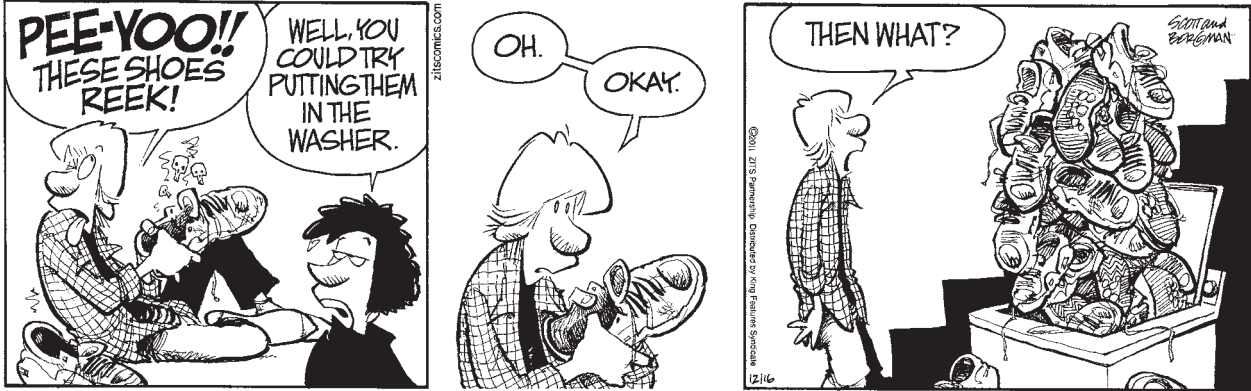
Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

	6		8		1			9
		5	4		3	8		
7	8					4	1	
				2				
	2	9				6	7	
		3	5		9	1		
1			7		2		6	

Difficulty Level ★★★★★ 12/16

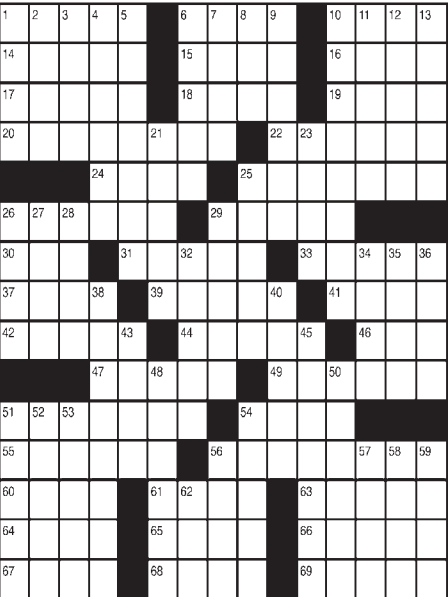
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

5	4	6	3	8	9	7	1	2
2	3	7	4	6	1	5	8	9
8	9	1	5	7	2	3	6	4
9	8	5	6	4	7	1	2	3
1	2	3	8	9	5	6	4	7
7	6	4	1	2	3	9	5	8
4	7	8	9	5	6	2	3	1
6	1	2	7	3	8	4	9	5
3	5	9	2	1	4	8	7	6

ACROSS

- 1 Set on fire
- 6 Crusty wound covering
- 10 Injection
- 14 Boise's state
- 15 Tiny amount
- 16 Give a traffic ticket to
- 17 Memos
- 18 Winter vehicle
- 19 Poker player's opening bet
- 20 Grad student's written work
- 22 Flower bed
- 24 Neat
- 25 Planet closest to the sun
- 26 Red tape
- 29 One of the five senses
- 30 \_\_\_ thumbs; clumsy
- 31 Raring to go
- 33 Not taut, as a rope
- 37 Thirteen popes
- 39 Minimum
- 41 \_\_\_ log; hearth burner on Christmas Eve
- 42 Force out
- 44 Fibromyalgia symptoms
- 46 Religious sister
- 47 One of the Magi's gifts
- 49 Ohio & Oregon
- 51 Dogs
- 54 Perched upon
- 55 Ms. De Carlo
- 56 \_\_\_ of; threw out
- 60 Unconscious state
- 61 \_\_\_ in; wearing
- 63 Opening in a forest
- 64 Dishonest one
- 65 Donut center
- 66 Make straight
- 67 Swirling waters
- 68 Had debts
- 69 Warsaw natives



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews 12/16/11

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

WOOL	RYANS	STUB
ANNA	EASEL	LOPE
STUN	AMPLE	ADOS
HOSTELS	SERMONS	
ELM	HOKUM	
DWARF	BAN	LEADS
EARN	TOM	SERIAL
AGE	MOBSTER	DRY
LONDON	TEA	PEEL
SNAIL	SEN	TODDY
LABOR	CUE	
PLEURAL	BOBTAIL	
ROUT	TAPIR	ELMO
OGRE	OCEAN	STAN
WOOD	NEWSY	SONG

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DOWN

- 1 Slight coloring
- 2 Smell
- 3 At any \_\_\_; nevertheless
- 4 Swindles
- 5 Argumentative; very unfriendly
- 6 Actress Spacek
- 7 Nat King \_\_\_
- 8 Feasted
- 9 Merit \_\_\_; scout awards
- 10 Barely
- 11 Adherent of Gandhi's faith
- 12 Furry swimmer
- 13 Very small
- 21 Perfect
- 23 \_\_\_ and crafts
- 25 Swampy area
- 26 Robust
- 27 TV's Trebek
- 28 Feed the pigs
- 29 Instruct
- 32 \_\_\_ up; prepares
- 34 Mom's sister
- 35 Indication
- 36 Boyfriends for Barbie dolls
- 38 School for future priests
- 40 Quizzes
- 43 Singer Loretta
- 45 Like a solution that will help temporarily
- 48 Resound again and again
- 50 New York City's \_\_\_ Theater
- 51 Ride a bike
- 52 Stay away from
- 53 Wanderer
- 54 Helped
- 56 Valley
- 57 Jib or mizzen
- 58 Margin
- 59 Lairs
- 62 \_\_\_-down; rotten



# Today In History

**The Associated Press**

**Today is Friday, Dec. 16, the 350th day of 2011. There are 15 days left in the year.**

Highlights in history on this date:

1653 - Oliver Cromwell becomes lord protector of England, Scotland and Ireland.

1740 - Prussia's Frederick II enters Silesia —now in Poland— and begins the first Silesian War.

1773 - American colonists, dressed as Indians, dump 342 chests of tea overboard from a British ship in the Boston Harbor, staging a protest against British taxation. The event becomes known as "The Boston Tea Party."

1809 - Napoleon Bonaparte divorces Empress Josephine by an act of the French Senate.

1838 - Boers defeat Zulus on Blood River, Natal.

1879 - Transvaal Republic is proclaimed in what is now South Africa.

1884 - Britain recognizes the International Association of the Congo.

1916 - Gregory Rasputin, a monk who wielded powerful influence over the Russian Czar, is murdered by a group of noblemen in St. Petersburg.

1944 - German forces begin "Battle of the Bulge" in the Ardennes area of Belgium in World War II.

1950 - U.S. President Harry Truman proclaims a national state of emergency in order to fight "Communist imperialism."

1956 - The United Nations assumes control over most of the invaded sector of the Suez Canal Zone as Anglo-French troops continue their withdrawals under increased Egyptian harassment.

1960 - A United Air Lines DC-8 and a TWA Super Constellation collide over New York City, killing 134 people.

1966 - U.N. Security Council votes 11-0 to invoke economic sanctions against white minority government in Rhodesia.

1971 - Pakistani troops surrender East Pakistan



**Today is Benjamin Bratt's birthday**

after a war with its rebels and their Indian allies. The territory soon becomes the independent nation of Bangladesh.

1972 - U.S. Apollo 17 spacecraft heads for Earth after the last U.S. manned exploration of the Moon.

1979 - Five British soldiers are killed and another wounded in two Irish Republican Army bomb attacks in Northern Ireland after the group claims it would never take part in a Christmas cease-fire.

1985 - Reputed organized-crime chief Paul Castellano is shot to death outside a New York City restaurant.

1988 - A new U.N. peacekeeping force is announced to monitor the withdrawal of 50,000 Cuban troops from Angola.

1990 - Haitians elect populist priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide in the country's first fully democratic election.

1991 - The U.N. General Assembly rescinds its 1975 resolution equating Zionism with racism by an 111-25 vote.

1993 - The Israeli army closes off four Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank after the troops receive their first clear mandate to restrain settlers.

1996 - A car bomb explodes outside the

home of a prominent opposition leader in Medellin, Colombia, killing one person and injuring 48 others.

1997 - A U.N. team in Afghanistan reports finding mass graves with the bodies of what are thought to be 2,000 Taliban soldiers captured by the northern alliance.

1998 - The United States launches a wave of cruise missiles at military and intelligence installations in Iraq. U.N. weapons inspectors were evacuated earlier in the day, with their chief citing Iraqi obstruction of their work.

2000 -- Hundreds of Polish nurses block international railways and border crossings across the country as part of mounting protests for higher pay.

2001 - After nine weeks of siege, Afghan tribal leaders claim victory over al-Qaida guerrillas at their last stronghold in Afghanistan. But Osama bin Laden's whereabouts remain a mystery.

## Today's Birthdays:

John Selden, English jurist (1584-1654); Jane Austen, English novelist (1775-1817); Sir Noel Coward, English dramatist-composer (1899-1973); Margaret Mead, American anthropologist (1901-1978); Liv Ullmann, Norwegian actress (1938--); Benny Andersson, Swedish musician-composer, former member of ABBA (1946--); Benjamin Bratt, U.S. actor (1963--).

## Thought For Today:

Life means progress, and progress means suffering — Hendrik Willem Van Loon, Dutch-born journalist and lecturer (1882-1944). □

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Oranjestad	582-4000
Noord	587-0009
Sta. Cruz	585-4710
Savaneta	584-7000
San Nicolas	584-5000

## Emergency Numbers



Emergency	911
Police	100
Fire Dept.	115
Fire Dept. II	582-1108
Police Tipline	11141
Hospital	527-4000

## Oranjestad

Ambulance	582-1234
Police	582-4000

## San Nicolas

Ambulance	584-5050
Police station	584-5000
BGD San Nicolas	584-1606
Valero Security	584-1720

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**Foundation Amor**

**pa Prohimo**

Tel: 583-3354 / 586-6976

**Women in Difficulties**

**Foundation**

Tel: 583-5400







## Wynton Marsalis named CBS' cultural correspondent

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Musician and educator Wynton Marsalis has been named as cultural correspondent for CBS News.

The network said Thursday that Marsalis will report on a range of cultural and educational developments on "CBS This Morning" and "CBS Sunday Morning." His first appearance is scheduled for Jan. 16, as the nation observes the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr.

Marsalis has been associated with CBS News for a number of years. He has appeared on "60 Minutes," and it's his trumpet fanfare that opens "Sunday Morning" each week. He is a composer and has been the artistic director of jazz at New York City's Lincoln Center since 1987. He has won nine Grammy Awards. □



In this Oct. 24, 2007 file photo, musician Wynton Marsalis arrives for the 2007 Future Legends Awards at Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum in New York.

Associated Press

## Howard Stern named judge of 'America's Got Talent'

By FRAZIER MOORE

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Howard Stern will be joining the judges' panel on "America's Got Talent," and the NBC summer talent show will uproot itself from Los Angeles to accommodate the New York-based shock jock, the network said Thursday. NBC confirmed weeks-old rumors of Stern's selection to join fellow "Talent" judges Howie Mandel and Sharon Osbourne. Nick Cannon remains host. Stern, whose daily radio show airs on Sirius XM, is replacing Piers Morgan, who departed "Talent" after last season to free up his busy schedule. Last winter Morgan launched a weeknight interview program on CNN. "Howard Stern's larger-than-life personality will bring a thrilling new dynamic to 'America's Got Talent' starting this summer," said Paul Telegdy, NBC's president of alternative and late night programming. "He's a proven innovator and his track record in broadcasting is truly remarkable."



In a Dec. 1, 2010 file photo, Howard Stern attends the Quentin Tarantino Friars Club Roast at the New York Hilton Hotel in New York.

Associated Press

The show bills itself as TV's only talent competition show that is open to any age and any talent. Auditions for season seven began in October in major cities around the country. But now, with Stern aboard, production of the live broadcast of the show will relocate to New York. Stern, who in 2005 took his long-running syndicated show from terrestrial radio to Sirius XM, signed a new five-year contract with the satellite-radio company a year ago after months of stormy negotiations. □

## Globes swoon over cable dramas, snub networks



In this image released by Showtime, Damian Lewis portrays Nicholas "Nick" Brody in a scene from the Showtime original series, "Homeland." The show was nominated Thursday, Dec. 15, 2011 for a Golden Globe award for best TV drama series. Lewis was also nominated for best actor for his role in the series.

Associated Press

LYNN ELBER

AP Television Writer

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — The Golden Globes admire broadcast network comedies, but the respect is absent when it comes to drama. FX's "American Horror Story," Showtime's "Homeland" and three other cable entries dominated the best drama series nominations announced Thursday, with broadcast shut out. The other nominees in the category for next month's awards are HBO's "Boardwalk Empire," "Game of Thrones" and Starz' "Boss." When "Boardwalk Empire" claimed the Golden Globe last season for best drama series, one network entry did have a shot, CBS' "The Good Wife." But it failed to make the cut this time. Broadcasters have long complained that the unfettered world of cable allows room for shows that can be edgier and more adult — meaning sexier, more violent and sometimes just plain freaky — than programs carried on the public airwaves and subject to regulation. The Globes aren't alone in putting cable dramas on a pedestal: This year's Emmy nominations made "The

Good Wife" the sole broadcast nominee. That networks end up airing awards ceremonies that honor and give free promotion to their cable competitors is another source of broadcaster discontent.

Networks fared better in the comedy or musical series category, with nods going to last year's winner, Fox's "Glee," along with newcomer "New Girl," also on Fox, and ABC's "Modern Family." For "Glee," the nomination could be a salve for a ratings drop-off in season three.

Cable series with nominations include HBO's "Enlightened" and Showtime's "Episodes." "Good Wife" star (and Emmy winner) Julianna Margulies earned a best actress nod, joined by Madeleine Stowe of ABC's soapy freshman drama "Revenge." Other nominees are Claire Danes of "Homeland," Mireille Enos of AMC's "The Killing" and Callie Thorne of USA's "Necessary Roughness." Katey Sagal, who won last time around for FX's "Sons of Anarchy," was squeezed out of the Globes this time and the Emmys as well. Steve Buscemi of "Boardwalk Empire" has the

chance to repeat his Globe victory from last season for his portrayal of New Jersey gangster Nucky Thompson. He's competing with Bryan Cranston of AMC's "Breaking Bad," Kelsey Grammer of "Boss," Jeremy Irons of Showtime's "The Borgias" and Damian Lewis of "Homeland." The Globes went for a swap in the best actor in a comedy or musical series. Reigning Globes champ Jim Parsons of "The Big Bang Theory" was snubbed, while the show's Johnny Galecki earned a nomination.

Others in the category are Alec Baldwin of NBC's "30 Rock," David Duchovny of Showtime's "Californication," Thomas Jane of HBO's "Hung" and Matt LeBlanc of HBO's "Episodes." On the best actress side, newcomers include Laura Dern of HBO's "Enlightened" and Zooey Deschanel of "New Girl," competing with last year's winner Laura Linney of Showtime's "The Big C," Tina Fey of "30 Rock" and Amy Poehler of "Parks and Recreation," both on NBC. HBO earned a leading 18 nominations, followed by Showtime with eight and PBS with five. □



## MTV names Katy Perry its 1st artist of the year

**DAVID BAUDER**  
**AP Television Writer**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Katy Perry's run of No. 1 singles has earned her the distinction of becoming MTV's first artist of the year.

Perry topped Adele after a spirited discussion among MTV's internal panel of experts, the network said Thursday. Adele's "Rolling in the Deep" was chosen top song of 2011, said Amy Doyle, the network's chief of music programming.

MTV also declared Skrillex its electronic dance music artist of the year over David Guetta. Different parts of MTV would make "best of" lists in the past, but the network wanted to establish a franchise that brought all its online and TV arms together and emphasized MTV's music roots, Doyle said. The network, established in 1981, hopes it becomes an annual thing.

Seven panelists made the final choice, and their deliberations were featured in MTV programming this week. "Rolling in the Deep" was an obvious selection as top song, Doyle said. Runners-up were Nicki Minaj's "Super Bass" and Rihanna's

"We Found Love."

"I loved the song the moment I wrote it," Adele said. "The melody and the beat added some conviction to it. I think that's why people connected with it."

Perry's achievement of tying Michael Jackson's "Bad" as the only albums to yield five No. 1 singles was particularly impressive, Doyle said. Along with the title cut, "California Gurls," "E.T.," "Firework" and "Last Friday Night" (T.G.I.F.) all topped the charts. She's trying to beat the record with the current single "The One That Got Away."

"You just really felt her presence in pop culture throughout the year," Doyle said. Skrillex, whose real name is Sonny Moore, describes his music as a combination of "dubstep, electro and glitch." MTV included the category of best electronic dance music artist to pay tribute to the way the style is taking off with its young viewers, she said.

MTV also asked its viewers to vote on their choice of the best live performances shown on MTV all year. Their choice was "Hurricane" by Thirty Seconds to Mars. □

## TV companies have a year to pipe down loud ads



**In this April 20, 2010 file photo, Rep. Anna Eshoo, D-Calif., testifies before the House Financial Services Committee regarding Lehman Brothers and financial reform on Capitol Hill in Washington. Associated Press**

**By RYAN NAKASHIMA**  
**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Shush, already. That's the message the Federal Communications Commission is sending with new rules that force broadcast, cable and satellite companies to turn down the volume on blaring TV commercials. On Tuesday, the FCC passed a set of regulations that will prevent commercials from be-

ing louder than the shows around them. It's all part of the Commercial Advertisement Loudness Mitigation (or CALM) Act, which President Obama signed into law last December. The rules go into effect a year from now. Companies that don't comply will face unspecified FCC action. Thunderous television ads have annoyed viewers for years. The FCC says peo-

ple have grumbled about the issue for at least a half century. But since 2002 — thanks in part to all those clangorous car commercials, earsplitting electronics ads and booming beer pitches — loud advertisements have been one of the top complaints the FCC receives.

Complaints grew in recent years, as ads became even louder. In the days of analog TV, louder ads took up more space on the airwaves. So broadcasters toned them down to avoid interfering with other channels. Since the conversion to digital TV broadcasts two years ago, loud ads no longer take up more airwave space than quiet ones. The change transformed the commercial break into a noisy arms race.

"Nobody wanted to be the quiet guy in the set of commercials," says David Unsworth, senior vice president of satellite and technical operations at DG, a company that distributes ads to broadcasters.

In a recent analysis, DG found that some ads were 10 times as loud as the programs they interrupted.

"Everybody's been trying to push the envelope using (digital) compression to make their spots as loud as they can," Unsworth says.

A few years ago, an annoying ad got to the ears of Rep. Anna Eshoo, the Democratic congresswoman whose district in California's Silicon Valley is home to Facebook and Hewlett-Packard Co. While watching a sporting event with family members, Eshoo was jarred by a "horribly loud" commercial. Her brother-in-law suggested she do something about it. She did — with what started as a simple, one-page legislative proposal.

The measure became one of the most popular bills she's ever sponsored.

"What I never dreamed of was what kind of chord it would strike with people," Eshoo says. □

## Captain America co-creator Joe Simon dies in NYC

**MATT MOORE**  
**Associated Press**

**PHILADELPHIA (AP)** — Joe Simon, who along with Jack Kirby co-created Captain America and was one of the comic book industry's most revered writers, artists and editors, has died at age 98.

Simon's family relayed word of his death Thursday, posting a short statement on Facebook and telling The Associated Press through a spokesman that Simon died Wednesday night in New York City after a brief illness.

"Joe was one of a kind," said Steve Saffel, of Titan Books, a Simon friend who worked with him on his recent autobiography, "Joe Simon, My Life In Comics." Saffel said that Simon, born in Rochester, New York, in 1913, "lived life on his

terms and created incredible things in the process. It was a privilege to know him and to call him my friend."

Among Simon's creations was a partnership with Kirby, a comic book artist and illustrator. The duo worked



**In this Oct. 14, 2011 file photo, Joe Simon, co-creator of Captain America comic, is shown at the New York Comic Con fan convention in New York. Simon's family said Thursday, Dec. 15, 2011, that the 98-year-old artist and writer died Wednesday night in New York after a brief illness.**

**Associated Press**

hand-in-glove for years and from their fertile imaginations sprang a trove of characters, heroes, villains and misfits for several comic book companies in their Golden Age of the 1940s, including Timely, the forerunner of today's Marvel Comics; National Periodicals, the forerunner of DC; and Fawcett, among others.

The characters the two created included the Newsboy Legion, the Boy Commandos and others, like Blue Bolt.

"Blue Bolt was the first strip Jack and I worked on together, beginning in 1940. He was a science fiction swash-buckler I created for Curtis Publishing, the company that put out the Saturday Evening Post," Simon told the AP earlier this year. □



# Mitt's zest for zings



**GAIL COLLINS**

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Mitt Romney arrived in New York City on Wednesday, newly endorsed by Christine O'Donnell, who we have not seen since her not-a-witch race for the U.S. Senate. She praised Romney for having "been consistent since he changed his mind." I so miss Christine O'Donnell.

Romney was in town to raise money. Iowa and New Hampshire get the love; we get the traffic jams. 'Twas ever thus. We're not bitter, really.

However, he did sit down with The Times' Jeff Zeleny and Ashley Parker to compare himself to Newt Gingrich. (The above-the-fray Mitt is so November.) "Zany is not what we need in a president," he said.

I would say this is an extremely safe position for Romney to take because the odds are very good that no one has ever called Mitt zany in his entire life.

Unless it was when he drove to Canada with the family dog strapped to the roof of the station wagon. ("Hey, Mister, you got an Irish setter on top of your car. What are you, zany or something?")

Zany really is a pretty unusual word. Why do you think he chose it? Once, early in my journalistic career, I spent an unhappy season writing the stock market report for United Press International, and I remember trying to divert myself by beginning all my verbs with the same letter.

("Stocks zigged and zagged today in mixed trading, but the Dow zoomed on a late-day rally. ...") Do you think Mitt is trying to stay interested in his long and rather dreary campaign by describing his opponent with adjectives beginning with a different letter every day? Do you think he's going to start with Z and go backward? We will know for sure if tomorrow he points out that Newt is "kind of yappy."

"A leader needs to be someone of sobriety and stability and patience and temperance," Romney added. That's Mitt to a T. Or else the head of the Bring Back Prohibition League.

Perhaps Romney was worried that all those even-keeled vir-

tues sounded too much like Barack Obama, because he veered off into an attack on the current administration's foreign policy failures. "When Honduras wanted to toss out their pro-Marxist president, our president stood with him," he said.

OK, two problems here. First of all, you can hardly talk about Iraq or Afghanistan without somebody announcing that all the country cares about is jobs, jobs, jobs. Where do you think a former diplomatic problem in Honduras currently stands on the average voter's list of Things to Worry About? Second, the president of Honduras was elected. "Wanted to toss out" is Mitt-speak for "staged a coup."

The Republican candidates have had a very difficult time with foreign affairs this season. You had Herman Cain's Libya moment. Rick Perry tried claiming that as president he'd zero-base budget all foreign aid then ran into the Israel buzz saw, exempted "strategic aid in all forms" and appeared to wind up saying that he would take a hard-eyed look at any spending overseas that involved aid to hungry children. And then Obama batted back Romney's "appeasement" critique by telling them to "ask Osama bin Laden." So now we're down to Honduras in 2009.

This is an excellent time of the year, campaign-wise. Only 27,000 minutes until the Iowa caucuses! On Thursday, we'll have yet another debate. (First one ever in Sioux City!) What do you think Romney will offer to bet this time? A million dollars? A dime? His first-born child?

Polls suggest Gingrich's support may be softening. He's not having a great week. Actor Gary Busey suddenly announced, for no apparent reason, that he was retracting his endorsement, which he had made four days before. Perhaps Busey, who once competed in "Celebrity Apprentice," is hoping for a return of Donald Trump. Meanwhile, Newt is sticking to his no-attacking-fellow-Republicans pledge, while Romney is running around calling him everything from unreliable to uxorious. (I made the last one up.)

Iowa Republicans are running out of people to anoint front-runner. Really, the only possible candidate they haven't elevated is Rick Santorum, even though he's practically been living in the state. Not only has Santorum visited all 99 counties, "when he shows up, he does four to six events every day," said Tim Hagle, a political science professor at the University of Iowa. □



## Getting detained and gassed



**NICHOLAS D. KRISTOF**

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**MANAMA, Bahrain** – Nothing like getting pulled into a police car to glimpse, through a haze of tear gas, hints of a police state.

The royal family in this U.S. ally of Bahrain deserves immense credit for turning a desert island in the Persian Gulf into a modern banking center. The rulers have educated Bahrainis, built a large English-speaking middle class, empowered women and fostered such moderation that the ambassador to Washington is a woman from Bahrain's tiny Jewish community.

Yet our pals here also represent a brutal, family-run dictatorship, and few countries crushed the Arab Spring so decisively as Bahrain. The regime helpfully displayed this darker side a few days ago when riot police attacked the video journalist accompanying me and detained both of us.

We had tagged along to watch the small protests and clashes that continue to bubble up almost every evening in the villages of Bahrain. The pattern is invariably the same. A small group begins shouting "Down with Hamad," the king, and begins winding through the streets, with men and women running from their homes to join in.

One clash began when young men hurled rocks and Molotov cocktails at the police (protesters hugely undermine their cause when they do this). Later in the evening, in another village, a different group of marchers remained peaceful and held their arms out to show police that they were unarmed. But then one young man reached down and hurled a rock at the police officers – who immediately fired a barrage of tear gas grenades and charged at us. I ran.

The Times video journalist with me, Adam B. Ellick, stood his ground to record the scene. Policemen ran at him and – as Ellick shouted that he was an American journalist – one officer roughed him up and clubbed the camera, breaking part of it. If that's what they do to a Western journalist, you can imagine what would happen if they were to catch a kid with a rock.

Then the police pulled Ellick to a police car and stuffed him inside. He telephoned me, so I staggered through the tear gas to see if I could extricate him. So much for my persuasive powers: The police promptly detained me as well. They wedged me in the back seat of a different police car but treated me courteously. The detention turned out to be a fascinating "embed," because the police freely shared their venomous hatred of the protesters and their delusional view that they are all paid by Iran.

After about 30 minutes, a senior policeman arrived, asked us a few questions and then freed us. A few hours later came a classic touch of Bahrain propaganda: The government announced that we hadn't been detained but

had "sought police protection."

That was a flat lie, and it was a reminder to be wary of Bahrain assurances as the country claims to be turning a new leaf. In fairness, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa has shown some genuine signs of conciliation. He commissioned a blunt outside report into torture and other abuses. He pledged to put torturers on trial. He is again giving visas to journalists.

Yet the basic dynamic has not changed. One family still controls an entire country: Important positions almost all go to members of the royal family, who are Sunni Muslims. Shiites are the majority but amount to second-class citizens who are mostly kept out of the security services, in a system reminiscent of apartheid.

Maybe more reforms are in the works, but the government's conciliation program so far seems to me to be mostly a public relations exercise. If the regime were serious about reform, a basic step would be to replace the prime minister, Sheik Khalifa, a hard-liner who has been in office for 40 years. In many ways, the repression continues. I reconnected on this visit with a distinguished orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Ali Alekri, whom I had met in February as he was tending to his cousin whom the riot police had beaten into unconsciousness. Alekri has been sentenced to 15 years in prison on a collection of political charges, presumably as punishment for telling outsiders about deaths and injuries in the crackdown. He is free pending his appeal, and he filled me in:

In March, police burst into the operating theater as he was conducting surgery and dragged him out. □



# US formally ends Iraq war with little fanfare

**LOLITA C. BALDOR**  
**REBECCA SANTANA**  
**Associated Press**

**BAGHDAD (AP)** — Nearly nine years after American troops stormed across the Iraq border in a blaze of shock and awe, U.S. officials quietly ended the bloody and bitterly divisive conflict here Thursday, but the debate over whether it was worth the cost in money and lives is yet unanswered.

While many of the speeches painted a picture of victory — for both the troops and the Iraqi people now set on a path for democracy — the gnawing questions remain: Will Iraqis be able to forge their new government amid the still stubborn sectarian clashes. And will Iraq be able to defend itself and remain independent in a region



**U.S. Army soldiers from 1st Cavalry Division, based at Fort Hood, Texas react during a concert by the band Filter, who performed for troops waiting to go home after their deployment in Iraq, Thursday, Dec. 15, 2011, at Camp Virginia, Kuwait. After nearly nine years, 4,500 American dead and 100,000 Iraqi dead, U.S. officials formally shut down the war in Iraq - a conflict that Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said was worth the American sacrifice because it set Iraq on a path to democracy.**

(AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

fraught with turmoil and still steeped in insurgent threats.

Stark reminders of the frag-

ile and often violent nature of the situation in Iraq engulfed the 45-minute ceremony. It was tucked

into fortified corner of the airport, ringed with concrete blast walls. And on the chairs — nearly empty of Iraqis — were tags that listed not only the name of the VIP assigned to the seat, but the bunker they should move to in case of an attack.

The speeches touched on the success of the mission as well as its losses: Nearly 4,500 Americans and 100,000 Iraqis killed. Another 32,000 American and tens of thousands Iraqis wounded. And \$800 billion from the U.S. Treasury.

On the other side of the ledger, an Iraq free from the tyranny of Saddam Husse-

based on what is best for their people.

"Violence and prosperity cannot co-exist," said Austin, who eight years, eight months and 26 days ago gave the order for U.S. troops to storm across the border into Iraq. And on Thursday he gave the order to retire the flag of U.S. Forces-Iraq.

The flag was then rolled up, covered by a camouflage colored sheath and will be brought back to the U.S.

Speaking to the troops in the audience, Panetta lauded their service and their bravery, adding, "You will leave with great pride — lasting pride — secure in



**The US flag, Iraq flag, and the U.S. Forces-Iraq colors are carried during ceremonies marking the end of US military mission in Baghdad, Iraq, Thursday, Dec. 15, 2011. After nearly nine years, 4,500 American dead, 32,000 wounded and more than \$800 billion, U.S. officials formally shut down the war in Iraq a conflict that U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said was worth the price in blood and money, as it set Iraq on a path to democracy.**

(AP Photo/Khalid Mohammed)

in, inching forward toward democracy and vowing to be a good neighbor in the region.

"To be sure the cost was high — in blood and treasure of the United States and also the Iraqi people," Defense Secretary Leon Panetta told the roughly 200 troops and others in attendance. "Those lives have not been lost in vain -- they gave birth to an independent, free and sovereign Iraq."

Gen. Lloyd Austin, the top U.S. commander in Iraq, said the Iraqi people now have an unprecedented opportunity to live in a relatively peaceful environment, but he also acknowledged it will be a challenging time.

And he urged Iraqi leaders to make good choices

knowing that your sacrifice has helped the Iraqi people to begin a new chapter in history."

Many Iraqis, however, are uncertain of how that chapter will unfold.

Their relief at the end of Saddam, who was hanged on the last day of 2006, was tempered by a long and vicious war that was launched to find non-existent weapons of mass destruction and nearly plunged the nation into full-scale sectarian civil war.

"With this withdrawal, the Americans are leaving behind a destroyed country," said Mariam Khazim, a Shiite whose father was killed when a mortar shell struck his home in Sadr City. "The Americans did not leave modern schools or big factories behind them." □

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